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HERDER'S LETTERS.

LETTER VI.

Translation of the blessings of Jacob and Moses, and a parallel between them; with illustrations of some obscure passages.

**Y**ou wish to see the other brothers, as well as Judah, standing at their father's bed-side: let it be so then, though it will be found here and there no easy matter.\* [Genesis xlix.]

Gather yourselves together, I will announce to you  
What shall befall you in the days to come.  
Gather yourselves together and hear, ye sons of Jacob,  
Hear your father Israel.

Reuben, my first born,  
Thou, my might, the first fruits of my strength!  
The excellence of thy dignity, the excellence of thy power,  
Goes by thee like the swelling waves;  
Thou art the first no more!  
For thou didst ascend the bed of thy father,  
Thou didst defile, when thou ascended'st, my couch.

\* A great deal has been written, in the way of minute verbal criticism, upon Jacob's blessing. Any thing of this would, of course, be out of place in a journal like ours. The translator has, therefore, omitted the notes of his author to this letter; since the scholar will not need them, and to the greater part of our readers they would be unintelligible. The view which Herder gives of this celebrated portion of the Old Testament is popular and very beautiful. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that the patriarch, as he was expiring, actually pronounced all this benediction, at least in its present form. It might, and probably did, receive the shape in which we now find it, from some bard of after times.

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Think with what language the father must begin. With what a sigh for departed vigour and youth does he, after a moment, reject Reuben, the father's first joy, as to the crown of his race; to take away that crown at once and forever from his dishonoured head!

Simeon and Levi, brothers are they!  
 Murderers' weapons were their swords.  
 My heart was not in their counsel,  
 My soul shuddered at their bloody plot,  
 When full of rage they slaughtered the valiant,  
 When full of revenge they unnerved the noble steer.  
 Cursed be their malicious anger;  
 Cursed their implacable wrath!  
 I will divide them in Jacob,  
 Scatter them in Israel.

Another bitter recollection; which would be unintelligible but for the history that has been fortunately preserved in the 34th chapter of Genesis. In conformity to this I translate *the valiant* (i. e. *man*) and *steer* literally, without altering the text. They first unnerved the noble steer, cut, as it were, his sinews, and then it was easy to slay him: thirsting after his blood, they enticed him to submit to the pain of circumcision, that they might then unite to destroy him. The soul of Jacob even now so revolted from the cruelty, that he thought it dangerous for them, even in the latest generations, to dwell together: he therefore divided them.

The blessing of Judah I have already given: it sounds proudly after the three first, and the father himself seems to rouse and exalt himself as he utters it: it is therefore that the images roll along so majestically slow. But how can I, in my own language, give even the name of Judah the meaning which it has in the original? It is *praises*; and his brethren were to praise him. The first word, the very sound of his name, inspires the father. I go on to Zebulon:

Zebulon! at the sea coast shall he dwell!  
 At the coast of ships, the border leaning upon Sidon.  
 Issachar! a bony ass,  
 Who reposes between two troughs.  
 He sees the rest is good,  
 The land around is pleasant,  
 And bows his shoulder to bear,  
 And serves at the water-courses.



Is not the short address to Zebulon like an open, wide sea-prospect; and the character of Issachar, on the contrary, even to the tone and measure, the very quietness of the beast of burthen whose name suits him; who is so well pleased with the situation of his land, that he looks about him tranquilly, and forgets his load? I need not say any thing to you, who have read Homer, of the peaceable character of the ass: but if you would read his newer and most beautiful encomium, you must turn to Buffon's Natural History.

(*The Judge.*) DAN shall judge his people  
Like any other of the tribes of Israel.  
A snake will Dan be in the way,  
A darting snake\* in the foot-path.  
She biteth the horse's heels,  
So that backward the rider falleth.

There is no reason for showing from the history, whether reference is here had to the idolatry which sprung up in the tribe of Dan, or to Antichrist who should come forth from it.† It appears to me that we are here to consider nothing as spoken of but the cunning and stratagem, which lay in Dan's name and character, and by means of which his posterity were to overthrow horse and man; i. e. the most powerful enemies. The prophecy has been fulfilled, since Dan came into possession of a land full of hills and narrow valleys, full of caves and foot-paths, where he could display that artifice which has always been of admirable avail in war, and especially in defence. The confirmation of Dan in his rank and consequence, and the sceptre of a tribe with the other brothers, relates to the circumstances of his birth. He was the son of Rachel's maid, and her first born: (Gen. xxx. 6.) Jacob thus ennobles and legitimates him, as it were, in the name of all his brothers, alluding at the same time to his name and character; since he probably, on account of his sagacious counsels, stood deservedly high in their estimation. Now follows an abrupt sigh, on the connexion of which, with this place, I have nothing to decide.

In thy help I trust, O Jehovah!

Is it a mere pause, a softly respired sigh from the enfeebled father? Or is it a glance into the land of the patriarchs, with the

\* The *cerastes* is commonly understood.

† We would not withhold from our readers the names of some of these worthy interpreters, if we could find who any of them were.

wish of a gentle departure, and a deliverance in future extremity, according to the description of the dwelling-place of Dan? Or, finally, is Jacob reminded, by what he pronounces concerning Dan, of similar circumstances, contrivances, and rescues of his own life, and thanks God for the assistance that was lent? See what I have said elsewhere on this point.\*

GAD, (the host.)  
Hosts fall upon him;  
He falleth upon them in the rear.

The triple paranomasia, it is impossible to translate.†

From Asher cometh bread rich with oil,  
It is he who giveth dainties for kings.

This image was probably suggested by Asher's dexterity and mode of life. We know from the story of Isaac's transaction with Esau and Jacob, how much in those old simple shepherd-times, the preparing of rich and savoury food was valued; and that the sons' hands did not consider this as a task beneath them. It is not unlikely that Asher particularly recommended himself in this way to his father; and this furnished the ground of the description of his land. Nothing is more entirely in the pastoral spirit than this simplicity of incidental circumstances.

Naphthali is a spreading terebinth,  
Which shoots out beautiful branches.

This reading, which is found in all the ancient versions, and which Bochart, I think, was the first to bring into usage, is certainly superiour to the common one, and suits the connexion best: still I could almost wish, for the sake of the beauty of the other image, that it could be consistently retained.

\* We are referred to the "spirit of the Hebrew poetry." The opinion expressed there is this: "It seems to me that these words receive a pretty clear meaning from the connexion in which they stand. The land of Judæa was exposed on the north side to its most powerful and menacing inroads, as the history of all its invasions and troubles shows:—and there Dan was to dwell! there must Jehovah help the people, or they were lost. The paternal seer therefore hoped for divine aid, as with this sigh he looked deep into the necessities of the land of his children."

† Critics have been fond of seeking out many meanings in the name of Gad. Herder, in the work just alluded to, speaks of a *fourfold* paranomasia here. This, however, seems mere trifling. Gad means a troop, and it means also successful; and there is no need of looking after any further signification.



There follows after many small stars, a beautiful and brilliant evening star, Joseph: only he is here and there overcast by the covering of words as with clouds.

The bough of a fruitful mother is Joseph,  
The bough of a fruitful one by a fountain;  
Her young branches shoot over the wall.

So I should be disposed to read, with the countenance of the Samaritan and Arabic, instead of the common reading, which has neither grammatical consistency nor harmony of meaning: I have therefore readily held in the first line to the memory of Joseph's mother, the beloved Rachel. She is compared to a vine,—a common image of female fruitfulness (Ps. cxxviii. 3, &c.)—which is planted by a fountain. She indeed bore his father but two sons; but in Joseph she bore many; whose young twigs, the grand-children of Jacob, climb up the wall like cheerful tendrils.

Jacob now quits this image, and on account of the peculiar adventures of Joseph, adopts another. The fair Joseph was not permitted to shoot forth in peace: hard fortunes were waiting for him:

They distressed him and shot at him  
And hated him,—the archers:  
Still his bow remained firm,  
His hands and arms were strengthened.  
By the hands of the mighty God of Jacob,  
By the name of him who watched over Israel upon his stone,  
By thy father's God who helped thee!  
By the Almighty who further blesseth thee:—  
Blessings of the heavens above,  
Blessings of the deep beneath,  
Blessings of the breasts and the womb.

The blessings of thy father ascend far  
Above the blessings of my fathers,  
Up to the charms of the primeval hills:  
They will come upon Joseph's head,  
Upon the crown of the prince among his brethren.

I know of nothing that surpasses the lofty strain of this blessing, which Moses in his own, imitates, but cannot excel. Joseph stands there as an envied and persecuted man in the company of his brethren: they hated him, and shot at him bitter arrows: he, one against a multitude, stands firm, his bow-string faithful, his hand dexterous, his arm strong and agile. Can a

more striking image of hard fortunes in the young years of life, still more of fortunes produced by the envy, the hatred and persecution of brothers, be found any where? They exchange sport for conflict; many join themselves against one, who withstands them all. And through whom does he withstand them? Here Jacob reverts to the history of his own life. He had wrestled with the mighty One who gave him the name of Israel: this same, the strong God of Jacob, has strengthened Joseph: the gracious God of Jacob, who watched over him upon the bare stone, when he was persecuted, alone, and a stranger, was the guardian of his son in similar circumstances of desertion and solitude and a foreign land. Can any thing exceed the closeness and fatherliness of the images? And undoubtedly this is the meaning of them. When Moses, in his blessing, comes to these words, he changes "*the shepherd,\* the guardian God at the stone of Israel*" into "*the God who appeared to him in the bush*;" so that he understood the passage as we have understood it. Both Jacob and Moses give to the best of their posterity all the blessings, with which God had severally manifested himself to each of them. That the God, who discovered himself to Jacob in a dream, watched over him and blessed him as a shepherd, as the guardian of his fortunes; that Jacob, from this appearance, calculated as it were on the favour of his God; that the stone continued to be to him a sacred memorial and a house of the Divinity;—all this we know: and how could Jacob think more conformably to his manner of life? in whose name could he more worthily bless the benefactor of his old age, than in that of the protecting Deity of his once forsaken youth? And now, not yet satisfied to have bestowed on his darling son the best of his own life, every thing which he had received from God, he places all the blessings of his forefathers upon his head. God, under the name of THE ALMIGHTY, had blessed Abraham; and Abraham's blessing must descend upon Joseph. Isaac had blessed Jacob with the blessing of the heaven from above, the fertilizing dew; with the blessing of the deep beneath, with the fatness of the earth. Both he confers on Joseph with increase: for instead of the fulness of corn and wine, he gives him happily to possess and prosperously to enjoy abundance of the best, of human, of maternal fruitfulness. And even yet unsatisfied, Jacob summons

\* Lest the reader should be left to wonder why he is told here of *the shepherd*, &c. when the passage in question is translated, "*who watched over Israel*," &c., it may be worth while to remark, that the full import of the original word—at least according to Herder's idea—is to watch like a shepherd.



new powers, gathers all the delights of the primitive world, the spices and fruits of the mountains of paradise, of every eternal hill of antiquity,—which at that time probably still lived in memory, as belonging to an age, to a world, of deliciousness now no more—all he takes together and places in one fragrant garland upon the head of Joseph, who stands before him as a prince in his Egyptian splendour, and eminently deserves this garland composed of all the glories of the golden age that had departed. That this is the meaning of the prophecy is attested by the parallelism of the passages, by the reading of most of the ancient versions, and especially by the blessing of Moses, who has understood and applied these words precisely so.—I must make no apology for having written so copiously here: for the enthusiasm of the blessing, in its beautiful and growing energy, will hurry you away as it has myself. Benjamin's description is short: his character is wolfish and needs but few words.

Benjamin, a wolf, he raveneth early,  
And teareth the prey, and still at evening divideth spoil.

A watchful, active, successful, generous adventurer,—probably Benjamin's character.

\* \* \*

Although my time is short and my way yet long, I cannot help, having once engaged in this piece, applying myself to another and a still more difficult one, which receives light from this, and in return helps to illustrate it:—I mean THE BLESSING OF MOSES.\* It is wholly altered; because Moses gave the blessing not as father, but as a lawgiver, who had his own particular tribe, and took the lead of them all only in the name of Jehovah. No sons here stood around the bed of a father, but united Israel lay with its hosts before him: a numerous nation, almost exhausted with wanderings; one which had caused him great anxiety, which God had in various ways tried, and which now sighed longingly after repose. Thus all these circumstances, with whatever distinguished the several tribes in the wilderness, his and their situation, the afflictions and hopes of both, give the tone and import to this second benediction. They make an *introduction* necessary, which Jacob had no need of, and they suggest for an appropriate *conclusion* other necessities, other wishes; though it is undeniable, that the strain of the patriarch is floating before the spirit of Moses. Hear the solemn commencement, with which he announces his office:

\* Deut. xxxiii.

Jehovah came from Sinai,  
 Rose up unto them from Seir,  
 Broke forth in splendour from mount Paran ;  
 He came from the heights of Kadesh,  
 From his right hand shot forth the rushing fire.

How loveth He the tribes !  
 All thy majesty is around thee,  
 And they at thy feet  
 Receive the word of thy mouth.

What a magnificent beginning! Moses bids with it the most solemn stillness, a reverent, childlike silence. In all his fearful majesty God appears, and becomes the paternal teacher of his people, his children. They have laid themselves down at his feet, and now is Moses the mediator :

Through Moses came to us the law,  
 The inheritance of the community of Jacob ;  
 In Israel he was a king,  
 In the assembly of all the chiefs  
 Together with the tribes of Israel.

Thus confirmed as their leader among leaders, through whom God had given them their noble law, and who still speaks as the mediator of the tribes, he begins :

Reuben live! die not utterly away!  
 His forces grow numerous again.

Whether the benediction is upon Reuben, or not rather upon Simeon, who is wholly left out, and whose force, as related Numbers xxvi. 14., is very inferior to that of the rest,—or why Simeon has been thus omitted,—I cannot decide. The Alexandrine\* has inserted his name into the second line ; but I hesitate to follow it.

And this for Judah. He said :  
 Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah !  
 To his own people bring him back.  
 His arm will strive for him,  
 And Thou wilt be his help from his oppressors.

\* The Alexandrine copy only of the Septuagint reads : *Let Simeon be great in number*. This reading is also found in the Aldine and Complutensian editions. But no critic thinks these of sufficient authority to warrant the adoption of it.



How different is this from Jacob's blessing upon Judah ! Moses seems to have had him before his eyes, else the words "to his own people" are unintelligible. Probably it is the people *promised* to him, which, according to the first blessing familiar to every one's remembrance, should willingly subject itself to him. But how tame is this language when compared with that ! There a bold, mighty lion ; here a tribe fainting towards the end of its pilgrimage. Moses only gives him a hint that he must rely on the strength of his own arm to get possession of the land ; and wishes for him, what he wished for himself, the aid of God when his own force should be failing.

To Levi he said :

Thy light and right,\* Jehovah,  
Remain with thy chosen man,  
Whom thou didst try at the place of provocation,  
And with whom thou didst strive at the waters of contention.

He said to his father, to his mother :

"I know you not !"  
And knew his brethren not,  
And knew his sons not.

So will they keep thy law,  
And hold to thy covenant :  
They will teach Jacob thy judgments,  
Israel thy law.  
They shall burn incense before thee for a sweet savour,  
And bring burnt-offerings to thine altar.

Jehovah, bless their strength,  
Accept graciously the work of their hands.  
Strike down those who incline against them,  
And those who hate them, that they may avail nothing.

That this is the language of prayer to Jehovah is evident ; and the purport of it as a whole is equally manifest. We know from the history that Levi, especially the race of Aaron, was exposed to jealousy and hostility on account of their preferment : against these, the prayer entreats the divine blessing upon the future. At the same time, the force of their obligations is included,—that after the example of their great father, the first high-priest, they should acknowledge in the discharge of their office neither

\* It is thus that Herder translates the famous URIM and THUMMIM, on which volumes have been written, and probably nothing ever satisfactorily said.

father nor mother, but should always give place to the direction of light and righteousness,—that is, of an enlightened and true judgment.

So far there is no doubt. As to the history of Aaron, included here, my opinion is this. At Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, (Numbers xx.) the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, for want of water: the place acquired the name of the *place of contention*, and the *waters of contention*, like that in Rephidim, Exod. xvii. Aaron held out, as it appears, bravely against the people, and probably even against his own kindred, the tribe of Levi: at least, the history gives no hint of his having proved weak, and mentions him expressly with distinction in connexion with Moses, having taken part with his God. (Numbers xx. 1—8.) So distinguished were his truth and steadfastness, Moses brings them here, before his eyes, as a memorial in the sight of God and an example to his posterity. He wishes that God may not permit the downfall of the family of that man, whom he had himself chosen, who had endured so much for him, whose days had been so embittered: that, as it had hitherto observed his commandments, it may be true to Him hereafter, and execute his laws in Israel.

So far is the remembrance good; but weakness mixed itself at last with strength. Moses and Aaron mistrusted: they struck the rock, they spoke doubtful words before the people: there God contended with them: Aaron must be disrobed and die; Moses himself must not see the promised land:—the mournful history comes up before his sight as he pronounces the blessing even on his own tribe. He wishes that such a history may never be renewed; that the supremacy in the name of God (the light and right) may never be taken away from his posterity, as it was then taken from Aaron and conferred on his son. He warns the tribe of Levi; brings before them the truth and steadfastness of Aaron;—but at the same time the melancholy transaction presents itself, as it naturally must, in the last moments of his life, when he was about to suffer for its guilt, and to be excluded from the possession that was before him. In this connexion, the benediction is highly modest, domestic, and impassioned.

To Benjamin he said:

The beloved of the Lord, he shall dwell safely;

The Most High covereth him all the day,

And letteth him rest between his wings.

You see that, in the second line, I read with the Greek translator *עליו* (the Most High) instead of the idle *עליו*; (upon him)



since otherwise none of the lines agree with each other. As the aged Jacob implored the divine protection for his youngest son, from whom he was so unwillingly separated, on his way to Egypt, when Judah so affectionately became surety for him to his father;—so the aged Moses asks for him the same on his march into the land of promise. The image of the Most High is here taken from the accompanying cloud of the divine presence, or rather from the eagle hovering over its young; (Deut. xxxii. 11.) a favourite figure with Moses. *Between his shoulders* means the same as upon his back, or between his wings, as we find in several other places. A beautiful picture, amiably and tenderly conceived, but which has been much mistaken.

To Joseph he said :  
 Blessed of Jehovah be thy land,  
 With rich gifts of the heaven above,  
 Of the deep beneath.  
 Whatever precious the sun ripens,  
 Whatever the moons bring forth,  
 Whatever springs most precious on the hills of the East,  
 Whatever flourishes fairest on the primeval hills,  
 The earth's costliness and abundance,  
 Come through the blessing of Him, who dwelt in the bush,  
 Upon Joseph's head ;  
 Come upon the crown of the prince among his brethren.

As the firstling of the steer is his strength,  
 As the horns of the unicorn are his horns ;  
 With them will he push the people  
 To the very end of the land.  
 Such are the myriads of Ephraim,  
 The thousands of Manasseh.

That Jacob's, and, in the last passage, Balaam's blessing, is the foundation of this portion, cannot escape notice: still the merits of Joseph are reposing before the eye of the prophet, and his sons are arrayed in the glorious beauty of their father:—yet it seems to me that the blessing of the patriarch, part by part, is more original and stronger. The sources of felicity, which this latter mentions, go generations back, from the God of his own life's destinies to the blessing of his father, his grandfather, till he comes to the hills of the primeval world: he named them all, and laid them on the head of his princely son, who, in the array of a prince stood by his bed-side, distinguished from his brethren. With Moses this is changed. There stands no Joseph more, but the camp of a numerous people panting after refreshment. How

can he bless them more appropriately than with the refreshment they long for? Moses has no line of ancestors, from whose mouth he can bless Joseph with so much closeness, and particularly as Jacob did: of course these portions of the piece must be altered. Jacob spoke of the fruitfulness of heaven and earth as the blessing of his father, which he now transmitted to his son:—in the benediction of Moses only the physical sources of this fertility, the cornucopiæ as it were of nature, from above, from beneath, monthly, yearly, far and near, of present and past generations, could be alluded to. There is no need of my pointing out to you that in the last words, where the myriads of Ephraim, and only the thousands of Manasseh are mentioned, there is reference to the benediction of Jacob, (Gen. xlviii. 14—20) and to the preference which he gave to Ephraim. The comparison of valiant hosts to the horns and strength of a steer, is very common in the East.

To Zebulon he said :

Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy out-going ;

And in thy cottages, Issachar.

The tribes shall proclaim your mountain,

To offer sacrifices of righteousness there.

There they shall suck of the abundance of the seas,

Of the hidden treasures of the sand.

The reference is here unquestionably to the commerce of Zebulon : but it does not follow that he himself should engage in it, or go out upon the sea. The outgoing, v. 19, means the going out of dwellings ; as the next line about Issachar shows : and supposing Zebulon to have availed himself of his neighbourhood to Sidon and the trafficking coast, his industry might, in various ways, have made him a sharer of their treasures, and even of the luxuries of foreign nations, and brought him acquainted with them as the commercial friends of the Sidonians, without going from home ; and there the tribes, according to Moses, should proclaim the neighbouring Tabor as the mountain of the Lord, to offer there, and there only, right sacrifices : thus would these also, the brother-tribes, have a portion among the precious things of the land. According to Jacob's hint, Zebulon was leaning upon the border of Sidon ; according to the image of Moses, he is a child upon that border, who sucks the abundance of the sea, treasures, which he does not himself bring, but which flow in for him through Sidon by means of his neighbourhood and his industry. The glass\* which is alluded to here, at that time as precious as

\* The ground for supposing that glass is meant by "the hidden treasures of the sand" is, that on the borders of Zebulon's possession, the river Be-



gold, was not imported, but was a Phenician manufacture for exportation. We see from this blessing how little Moses was of a pedantic despot, blindly separating the Jews from all that was not Jewish. Zebulon should improve his vicinity to Sidon, and also the united tribes of the land should enjoy the advantage of it, through his means and the neighbourhood of mount Tabor. Issachar, on the contrary, remained in his cottages, rejoicing in the beautiful landscape which presented new views at every step; for it was such a country that his tribe in fact acquired.

To Gad he said:

Blessed be He, who maketh room for Gad!

As a lion he dwelleth,

And maketh a prey of shoulder and head.

The prime of the land he chose,

There lies well-protected the hero's possession;

Still he comes with the heads of his tribe,

To execute the decisions of Jehovah,

And his judgments with Israel.

The meaning of the whole is clear. Gad came into possession, according to the history, of the first portion in the conquered land; still he consented to march on with Israel, and to help finish its wars, the judgments of Jehovah. There is the room, which God made for Gad, while he and his forces were straitened: here are the firstlings of the prey, which he devours from the hills of Bashan. He was to be a brave tribe, as the blessing of his ancestor had already designated. Moses honours him with a comparison to the lion, with the name of martial chief, numbers him among the heads of the people, and is animated at the thought of his marching still onwards and completing the conquest. We find in the history of David, that the tribe of Gad contained at that time valiant men.

To Dan he said:

Dan, a young lion,

Will spring forth out of Bashan.

You remember the darting serpent in the foot-path, in Jacob's benediction: and bear in mind Dan's land of bush and mountain and cave.

lus flowed into the Mediterranean sea; from the sands of which stream, at its mouth, the first glass was made in very ancient times—Strabo, Lib. xvi. Pliny, Hist. Nat. Lib. xxxvi. c. 26. Tacitus, Hist. Lib. v. c. 7. Josephus, de Bel. Jud. ii. c. 9.

To Naphthali he said :  
Satisfied with favour,  
Full of the blessing of Jehovah,  
Possess the sea and the south.

To Asher he said :  
Blessed be Asher before the sons of Jacob !  
Pleasant let him be in the sight of his brethren !  
He dippeth his feet in oil.  
Iron and brass be thy bars ;  
As long as thy life let thy strength endure !

Here the blessing of Moses grows more noble ; and the conclusion is with the whole soul of the lawgiver, who uttered the princely, immortal covenant-song.

None, O Israel, is like God,  
Who rideth in the heavens for thy help,  
Upon the high clouds in his majesty.

From his dwelling-place stretcheth down the God of the dawning  
The everlasting arm :  
He thirst from before thy face  
The enemy far away,  
And said : perish !

And Israel shall dwell safely alone :

The eye of Jacob beholds  
A land full of corn and wine.

Favoured Israel,

Who is like thee ?

Thou people, whom God delivered,

He, the shield of thy help,

He, the sword of thine excellency.

They will feign to thee,—thine enemies,—  
And thou shalt tread on their high places.

What a legislator who so concluded ! What a people, who had  
such a God, such assistance, such ordinances and promises !



## LOVE TO GOD

Love to God is the essence of religion; that principle, which both implies and produces universal obedience, without which our professions are but hollow pretences, and our devotion but solemn mockery. It is that holy affection, which leads us to repose with the confidence of children on their father, which relieves the pains of our afflictions, takes from our sacrifices their bitterness, and converts our severest duties into our choicest pleasures. Jesus Christ, who, while he was in the world, gave such astonishing displays of his love to God, has taught us the nature and grounds of this duty. The command indeed was delivered by Moses to the Jews, and it has its foundation in natural as well as in revealed religion. Because under every dispensation God is our father; and from everlasting to everlasting possesses the same perfections for his children to reverence and love. But in the gospel of Christ, it appears under new and more powerful sanctions. It is addressed to us as rational creatures, formed to distinguish and love what is pure and exalted; and as children of a tender Father, receiving from him all that we possess, and depending upon Him for all that we hope. It is addressed then to our reason, teaching us to admire infinite perfection in *itself considered*, and to our gratitude, from the view of these perfections, as exercised for our happiness and good.

That we are disposed to love purity and all moral excellence without any reference to our own advantage, is the effect of that power by which God in his goodness has exalted the rational above the merely animal part of creation. The distinctions of moral good and evil are strongly marked in the mind of every intelligent being. We immediately perceive a deformity in the one; a loveliness and beauty in the other. If we hear of a fellow-creature of distinguished purity, we love and admire him, even though he be too far from us to enable us to feel the influence of his virtue. If to this purity be united an active and liberal benevolence, which dispenses happiness to all around him, our admiration is increased; and though we are not benefitted, we feel for this virtuous individual something of the tenderness we should cherish for a personal benefactor. This is the impression, which the imperfect, limited goodness of a being like ourselves, seldom fails to produce in a mind unperverted by interest or passion. How then should we view the infinite perfections of God? With what feelings of love and reverence should we contemplate his spotless holiness and truth, his justice and benevolence, with all those moral attributes, which in the

weakest being are the noblest object of our love, but which become great and venerable, when considered with the wisdom and power to which they are united in him. The view of such a being as God, even were it possible to suppose ourselves unaffected by his existence, must be delightful to the mind; and must inspire an affection, proportioned to the infinite nature of the object. This is the purest and most elevated source of love to God. For gratitude, though indeed a very generous foundation of love, is in its very nature mingled with selfishness. We cannot but love those who do us good; and even in the brute creation, we may see many affecting instances of love proceeding from gratitude, which in its strength and duration might put to shame the feeble wavering affection of man. When, therefore, we love God for his own perfections, our love is built on the sublimest foundation; and we direct our reason and affections to the noblest object.

But however ennobling these speculative views of the divine perfections may be, they are not, it must be confessed, sufficient to maintain within us that constant and lively love, which we owe to God. We are but imperfect creatures, and require something more than reason to awaken our affections. When then to the motives, which reason suggests, we add the consideration of the near and tender relation, in which we stand to this perfect Being;—when we view God as our Creator, Benefactor, and Friend, the author and guardian of our lives, the giver of all our blessings, and the fountain of all our hopes, because the God and Father of Jesus Christ, we find every thing that can excite our love and kindle it to the brightest flame. Of all human relations, that which exists between parent and child is perhaps the nearest and most interesting. This is the relation which unites us to God. We are his children; and it would be impossible to recount the obligations, which his boundless goodness has imposed. The existence he has given us, is the first of these blessings; and he crowns it by continual mercies. He connects the supply of our animal wants, which we have in common with the humblest part of his creation, with refined pleasures, of which none but rational beings can conceive. He has clothed this world, we inhabit, with ten thousand charms, so that while it displays his glory, it ministers to our delight. He has formed us for his own service and for mutual love; and he makes the labors of religion, of benevolence, and friendship our best enjoyments. And above all, He is merciful to forgive us our sins; for when we had broken his laws and deserved his righteous displeasure, he sent the Son of his love to die for our offences, and to proclaim his redeeming salvation and peace. In a word, he is a



kind and tender Father, ever watchful for his children, ever ready to listen to their prayers, and suffering neither their disobedience or unthankfulness to stop the tide of his mercies.

But God is not only our creator and benefactor:—He is also our Governor and Judge. We are required to love the *Lord our God*. All these indeed are in Him essential parts of his relation to us as Father; and the union of these exalted characters, while they increase our religious reverence, must strengthen also the foundations of our love. It has been said, that there is no human being more deserving of honour and gratitude than a virtuous sovereign, resisting the temptations to personal aggrandizement, and making the laws of justice and the happiness of his kingdom the rules of his government. How then should we love the great Governor of the universe! whose sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness, whose laws are holiness and truth, and whose infinite perfections are all combined for the happiness and improvement of his creatures. The character of a judge we have been accustomed to view with something like terror; but it is only from seeing the imperfect exercise of this character among beings like ourselves. A human judge can only punish the wicked. It is not in his power to reward the righteous. The greatest praise that he can bestow is, that they have never deserved his sentence; and hence it is, that he seems clothed to us with nothing but frowns and terrors. But in God these frowns against sinners are mingled with smiles and favours for his saints. The stern office of *judge* is softened for them to the endearing relation of *Rewarder and Friend*. The sentence which he pronounces upon them, is the sentence of his approbation; and as it is the pledge of their eternal felicity, so it opens a new foundation for their gratitude and love.

Yet it has been said, that love, like this, founded on gratitude for past favours, and on hopes of future reward, is a mercenary principle, and will never be accepted for that pure disinterested affection, which God requires. We have already admitted, that love, arising from disinterested views of the divine character, is the sublimest sentiment we can cherish. But God, who knows our frame, demands from us no more than the weakness of our nature will enable us to perform. In the august temple of religion, we must enter at the threshold, before we can reach the summit. Our steps at first are slow and trembling, and we need encouragement to assist our infant labours. These encouragements our heavenly Father affords us. He takes us by the hand, assures us of his love, and allures us at first to himself by the ties of gratitude and

hope. These are ties, which unite dependants to their benefactors. These are the ties, which at first unite man to his Maker, in which reason can find nothing mean or servile, and which the word of God has declared to be sacred. The patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and first ministers of the Saviour, were all inspired by the promise of reward. Nay, we are expressly directed to look to the High Priest of our profession, *who, for the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross and despised the shame. To pronounce therefore all love of God to be unavailing, but that which arises from disinterested views of his perfections, is an attempt to raise our nature to a refinement inconsistent with its present feeble state. It is rashly pronouncing vain what God has graciously promised to accept. Slaves as we are to sense, and allied to dust and ashes, we need motives suited to our condition. These motives, I repeat, our kind heavenly Father has afforded us, and they must continue to be the spring of our actions, till we arrive at that perfect world, where hope shall be changed to fruition, and the glories of God shall be so fully in our view, that we shall need nothing more to inspire all our devotion and love. Nay; gratitude will inspire the praises even of heaven. For in that revelation, which our ascended Lord made to his beloved disciple of the heavenly state, the saints are described as singing a new song, and saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, *for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.*"

We perceive then from these remarks on the *foundation*, what must be the *nature* of love to God; we perceive that it is an affection of the soul, excited by a view of his adorable excellence, and of his goodness towards us as his children. It is a pure and spiritual affection; for a Being of spotless purity could inspire no other. It differs from that which we cherish for even the most exalted creature, because its object is infinitely holy, and wise, and good; and because the best of his creatures are infinitely removed from him. It unites in itself all those views, with which a rational and pious soul can contemplate such a Being as we have described. It includes an humble sense of dependence, and is therefore mingled with delight and reverence of his perfections, with gratitude for his goodness, with submission to his will, with desires of his acceptance, and with fear of his displeasure. Some of these indeed may be more properly considered as the *effects* of this love; but they are so intimately and necessarily united, that they may with sufficient correctness be viewed as essential to its nature. We all know what is meant



by filial and parental relation; and the love which a grateful child cherishes for a tender father is the best image to represent the love of the grateful soul to God. All those ties which bind us to an earthly parent, conspire to unite us to *Him*. In the former, indeed, we see an object as imperfect as ourselves; and our own advancing years, with the fondness of parental indulgence, too soon perhaps make us forget our inferiority. But our heavenly Father is infinitely removed from us; our tenderest love to Him, therefore, must be mingled with humble and holy fear. With the powers of angels and the improvements of eternity, we must still be at an immeasurable distance from God. The highest saints in heaven join with the humblest worshippers on earth to adore his Majesty. They cast their crowns at their feet; and even while they sing of his love, they veil their faces before the brightness of his glory.

Love to God, we may add, consists not in transient emotions, excited by occasional views of his character, much less by any violent outward impressions. It must be grounded on the sober conviction of the understanding; and if it proceed from no other sources than these, we have much reason to doubt its genuineness. True love is calm and peaceful; but distempered fervours resemble too much the raging of the elements, without being followed by that refreshing health and purity which the storms of the natural world are kindly designed to produce. They shatter and exhaust the soul; but leave, it is to be feared, no goodly fruits behind. When the cause has once ceased to operate, the effect too soon subsides; and we shall be disappointed, if, after this ruinous desolation, we look for any thing more than a lifeless calm. The affections indeed should all be purified, so as to lend their aid to religion; but amid the raptures of a deluded fancy, or the wildness of enthusiasm, true love to God has seldom been found. This state of mind has sometimes been united with a pious sensibility, which, in a calmer and happier frame, might be the spring of the purest devotion. A sensibility like this sometimes arises from dwelling too long and fearfully on the great subjects of religion. It is most generally the effect of distrustful views, both of ourselves and of God. And even when mingled with much weakness and delusion, it must be the object of our tenderest compassion. For if there be any being, whom, we may suppose, the Father of mercies will delight to visit with the cheering comforts of his grace, it surely must be he, whose soul is lost and overwhelmed in the contemplation of his own dread perfections, who trembles at the sense of his unworthiness, and dares not so much as lift up his eye unto heaven to supplicate the forbearing mercy of his God. While, however, the

affectionate spirit of the gospel directs us to regard with tenderness what we may think the weakness or delusion of a fellow disciple, let us be cautious for ourselves of mistaking the fervors of passion for the genuine power of religion.

No less dangerous, however, is the other extreme of making the love of God a mere exercise of reason. While it has its foundation in the understanding, it must live and flourish in the heart. True love is a calm, yet an ardent affection; consistent and progressive; showing its purity and efficacy in the holiness of the life. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments;" and "whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected." It will conform us to the image of God himself. It will include a constant and unreserved compliance with his will; a sacrifice of those passions and habits, which are opposed to the spirit of his law, an anxious guard upon our thoughts and words and actions, and a jealous watchfulness, lest in the moment of temptation we should be betrayed into sin. It requires, not only that we prevent our corrupt inclinations from ripening into action, but that we stifle them in their birth. It begets that tenderness of conscience, that acuteness of moral sensibility, which forbids our making the slightest deviations from the path of duty, even though we might secure by it the most important gain, or procure our most favourite pleasure. It consists not in a few great and splendid acts of religion, such as exhaust all the soul, and unfit us for the common occurrences of life. Few men at this happy period of the world are called to make very laborious exertions or submit to very painful outward sacrifices. God be thanked, that the reign of persecution is over. We are not required, as were the first believers of the gospel, as have been many Christians in different ages of the church, to resign our friends, our property, and lives, in defence of our faith, or in proving our love to God. Our religion has had sufficient power to obtain for itself at least a nominal reception, and the arm of violence and the sword of persecution have ceased from the earth. We enjoy a tranquillity, which is most favourable for cherishing a life of pious obedience; and we can evince the sincerity of our love by the habitual exercise of that holiness, which, as it principally consists in virtues, too humble to attract the admiration of the world, cannot easily spring from any corrupt or worldly motives. In those bitter conflicts, which the noble army of the martyrs have so gloriously sustained, it is impossible not to believe, that they were animated by the most ardent love to God and reverence of his truth. But if, in the sufferings they endured, they mingled their sacrifices with any expectations of worldly fame; if, amid the tortures of the stake,



they gathered any of their courage from the compassion or the applauses of the multitude, their virtue was so far imperfect, and they then received part of their reward. Let none therefore imagine, that they can give no acceptable evidence of their love to God, but by great and exalted outward efforts; an error, which though probably seldom existing in reality, is sometimes assumed as a cloak for religious indolence. It leads men not, as might be expected, to strive for exalted heights in religion, but to neglect those humbler attainments, which the goodness of God has placed within the reach of the feeblest of his creatures. Let it be remembered, that the most genuine expression of love is that sincere obedience which extends to our minutest actions, which enters with us into the most familiar concerns of life, which pervades and purifies all that we think, or speak, or do; that humble, unreserved obedience, which compounds for no favourite indulgencies, but looks steadily and habitually to that solemn law which declares, that "he who offends in one point is guilty of all."

True love to God will also produce within us an entire resignation to his will, and to all the afflictions which his Providence may send us. This is a part of universal obedience; but it is its hardest lesson; and a lesson too, which love alone will enable us to practice. In the season of prosperity, when every thing is smiling around us, the path of duty is easy and delightful. It is attended with so many pure and animating pleasures, that even did it promise us no future rewards, we might choose it as the surest road to present happiness. But when our pleasing prospects are obscured, and the sources of these blessings closed upon us, we shall find in love to God our only substantial comfort. It is the value of this affection, that it inspires trust and confidence; that it teaches us to view God as a tender Father, full of the kindest compassion for all his children, and sending them present sorrows only to prepare them for eternal blessedness. Acquaint then thyself with him, thou child of sorrow, and be at peace; for thereby good shall come unto thee. Thy heart, which perhaps had too fondly rested upon the objects of earthly love, will be weaned from the world, and will centre upon God. Thy present afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

We should be grateful, that we are permitted and encouraged to cherish such an affection for a Being so great and holy. The world looks with envy on the man, who is admitted to the friendship of the great and powerful, and foolishly imagines, that he has obtained a security against almost every evil. Others with far more reason have desired to mingle with the sages and philoso-

phers of their race, hoping to learn of their wisdom, and to catch something of their spirit. Yet in courting the friendship of those, whose rank, wisdom, or talents have raised them a little above the level of their fellow worms, our pride is often humbled; for though weak and imperfect like ourselves, they seldom fail to remind us, that our attainments are inferior to theirs. But the humblest of us are invited to become the friends of God. In his adorable condescension he bends to proffer us his favour and love. He loads us with his benefits; he crowns our lives with his mercies, and all the return he demands, is that of grateful and obedient lives. Nay, even for this, which surely is but his most righteous debt, he promises us the richest blessings of his grace. He declares, that he will keep them in perfect peace whose minds are fixed on Him; he assures them, that all things shall work together for their good, and promises them joys in heaven, which eye hath not seen, which ear hath never heard, and which it hath never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

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ON JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

SIR,

It has long appeared to me matter of just surprise, that so little notice has been taken of an obvious mistranslation of the celebrated text, Jeremiah xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it.* The orthodox have been allowed to hold quiet possession of this text; or, at least, to derive from it all the support to their system, which our common version appears to lend. It seems to have been admitted without investigation, that the meaning of the original has been fairly given; and the common reply to the Calvinistic use which has been made of the declaration, *The heart is desperately wicked*, has been, that the words will admit a more liberal interpretation, and that, far from favouring the doctrine of *original and total depravity*, they merely imply, what we all believe, that the human heart is liable, through its native weakness and the influence of temptation, to become exceedingly corrupt and wicked, even to such an extent as to be past all hope of reformation.

I admit that this reply is perfectly satisfactory: but a reference to the original passage will, I imagine, satisfy any candid person,



that our translators had very little authority, none that I can perceive for introducing into their version the terms, *desperately wicked*. The Hebrew term, thus rendered, is *שׁוֹנֵא*, which, according to Buxtorf, signifies, *mortiferus, aegerrimus*, that is, *mortal, grievously sick*; or if we disregard the authority of the Masorites, the same term is equivalent to *homo, man*.

The opinion of Archbishop Secker, it will be admitted, is justly entitled to great weight. His marginal note on this passage is as follows: "The term rendered, *desperately wicked*, signifies *man*, or *sick*, and perhaps *incurable*, or *desperate*, but, I believe, never *desperately wicked*. Perhaps, *to be despaired of*." In Blaney's version, the verse reads thus: "The heart is wily above all things; it is even past all hope; who can know it?" That is, as it is explained in a note, "humanly speaking, there is no chance that any one should trace it through all its windings, and discover what is at the bottom of it." A bare inspection of the context will evince the propriety of this rendering. The heart is deceitful or wily above all things, and incurably so, or to such an extent as to elude the keenest penetration; and then the inquiry is very naturally proposed, "who can know it?" that is, in consequence of its *deceitfulness*, as is very obvious, and not of its being *desperately wicked*. The following verse still further confirms this interpretation. "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins." That is, as I understand it, however we may elude human penetration, and successfully practice upon ourselves or others the arts of deception, we cannot deceive God. He can penetrate to the inmost recesses of the heart, and can trace every thought and purpose to the secret springs which gave them birth.

I do, therefore, confidently hope, that the passage in question will no longer be appealed to as a proof text of the doctrine of total depravity, with which it appears to have no connexion whatever; and that it will be suffered quietly to answer the purpose for which it appears to have been originally written; to teach us the practical lesson, that, however secret may be the machinations of the wicked, and however successfully they may practice upon their fellow mortals the arts of hypocrisy and deception; yet there is a Being, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, and who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.\* N. H.

\* The opinion expressed above is countenanced by many authorities, of which I have had opportunity to consult but few. The LXX translate Βαβυλὼν ἡ καρδία παρά πύρρα, καὶ ἀνθρώπος ἐστὶ, καὶ τίς γινώσκει αὐτόν; that is,

## A WRITER'S CHARACTER AS AFFECTING HIS WORKS.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

"I would not read in the pulpit a hymn of M.'s composing, however unexceptionable it might be in itself,—such is my opinion of the *man*." The feeling, discovered by the worthy clergyman who expressed himself in this manner, is not uncommon towards writings which are unsupported by the principles or character of the author. The sins of the parent are visited upon his literary offspring. An innocent, and perhaps valuable production is condemned to neglect, because the writer is not respected.

Though at first view this verdict may not seem to be quite philosophical, (and the clergyman I have quoted, seemed to think his was wrong), yet I think it is far from being indefensible, and in some cases, and under certain circumstances, is evidently a correct and proper one.

It is true that literary, no less than civil justice, ought to be blind to every consideration but the merits of the case; that the province of criticism is to examine writings, not men; and that, therefore, in trying any production, it has no more right to inquire concerning the author's character, than concerning his rank, station, profession, country or colour.

It is true that, by yielding to our aversions and predilections, there is danger that our judgment may be impaired and perverted; that we may reprobate works which might be useful to us, and even doctrines and opinions which are sound and important, on account of their association with a hated name; that we may read the objectionable parts of a favourite author with less disapprobation than they deserve; and that our very principles and feelings may thus be insensibly corrupted. "What Cato did, and Addison approved," said Budgel when about to commit suicide, "*cannot be wrong*."\* In this manner, the indulgence of our prepossessions may lead to the grossest violations of that law of criticism and good sense, which requires us to judge of writings, of doctrines and opinions, according to their intrinsic na-

The heart is deep, or unsearchable, above all things, so also is man, and who can know him? This, as it will be perceived, is the original rendered almost word for word. עקב הלב מכל ואנש הוא מי ידענו. In the commentary of Drusius אנוש is translated *vir, man*; "Inscrutabile cor omnium; *vir* autem quis est qui inveniat illud?"—what man is there who can know it?

\* "This charge against Addison," says a respectable writer, "is wholly groundless." No doubt it is; but whether true or false, it serves to exemplify my meaning.



ture; and such violations may become the means of our moral depravation.

It is true, also, that the proneness of mankind to submit to a sort of foreign influence in literary affairs,—to be determined in their judgment of writings by extraneous considerations,—has been productive of much illiberality, of much injustice, and evil in the world. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth,” is the constant inquiry of lettered, no less than of religious bigotry. To belong to a particular country, place, profession, or condition; to be engaged in certain occupations and pursuits; to have been educated at a seminary, where perhaps the inspiration of learned pomp and frippery is unfelt; to be “guilty of a skin not coloured” according to the orthodoxy of northern fancies; to be, from accident, honesty, or spirit, little favoured by patronage or fortune; or even to be called by a name, which happens to be spelled with a vowel or consonant too much or too little; is with many, in its effect on a man's works, the same thing as to want learning, talents, genius, or good sense. On the other hand, an important station in society, a lucky celebrity, or a splendid fortune, is a sure passport to public favour for writings which are not chargeable with deficiency of merit; and not unfrequently procures applause for such as are deserving of censure and contempt,—for the miserable effusions of party rancour, and conceited ignorance, of bad temper, bad principles, and bad taste.

Many a valuable work, has, I doubt not, been condemned to oblivion by an unfortunate association; and many a worthless scribble, many a pernicious and absurd doctrine and opinion, have been saved from sinking by the buoyancy of a name. There have been instances, where a name has been, in the moral world, the lever of Archimedes. It has wielded the minds of men with an astonishing and almost supernatural agency. It has given them eyes to see, as realities, the strangest fabrications of sophistry, or of a disordered imagination. It has maintained false systems of philosophy and theology; corrupted literature, morality and religion; consecrated innumerable prejudices; and formed one of the chief obstacles to human improvement. How many erroneous, absurd and injurious notions prevail, not only in pagan and popish countries, but in countries the most free and enlightened;—notions, which have nothing to support their usurpation of the place of truth, but *authority*; and which, were reason allowed its full and just operation, would disappear like mists before the sun!

All this will be readily admitted. It cannot be denied, that we ought to judge of the productions of human intellect by

their intrinsic merits; and that the obtrusion of other considerations, addressed to the feelings and imagination, is apt to be productive of bad effects. But must we be necessarily blind to the merits or defects of a literary work, because we dislike or esteem the author? Will our feelings towards the *man* put it out of our power to perceive that his performance manifests ingenuity or dulness, learning or ignorance, a correct or a false taste, sound and elevated, or low and pernicious sentiments? I believe not. It will not be pretended, that a knowledge of an author's character necessarily perverts our judgment, or depraves our principles and feelings; that it is incompatible with a discernment of the real merits of his writings, or with a just appreciation of his sentiments; and, therefore, it cannot be incumbent on us to shut our eyes to his good or bad qualities, or our hearts to the impressions they are suited to excite. But is it possible for us to read with equal *satisfaction* and *improvement* the writings of one whom we abhor, and of one whom we love and venerate? Certainly not. The law of association forbids it. Agreeable or disagreeable recollections of the author's character will accompany, in a greater or less degree, the perusal of his works; and the effect upon us will be salutary or otherwise, according to the nature of those recollections. Whatever power we have over our thoughts, (and no doubt we have sufficient for every valuable purpose,) it may be safely asserted, that in this respect we are far from being free. Now, if such is the influence of association, (and every one's experience must convince him that it is;) if we are more delighted and edified by a sermon, a hymn, a prayer, of a virtuous and exemplary christian, than of an avowed and graceless infidel; it surely cannot be wrong to prefer the devout effusions of the one, to the spiritual coinage of the other, even supposing that, by a happy effort of art, there were nothing in the two cases to occasion different emotions, but the difference of the two characters. To allege that it would be, were, I think, to charge nature with folly,—to condemn the very frame and constitution of our minds.

But is not the forming of such associations very much in our power? Unquestionably it is, as well as of all our habits. It is hardly possible, however, to exclude from our minds all impressions concerning the characters of authors. We shall often, in conversation and in books, meet with anecdotes and observations about them, even if we read no particular accounts of their lives; if some do not, many will; and the ideas thus formed of the *men* will connect themselves with their *writings*, more or less forcibly according to the strength of memory, natural temperament, the frequency of repetition, and other circumstances.



Hence arises an objection to using certain hymns, otherwise unexceptionable, in our meetings for public worship. The uncommon excellence of some of them, however, would render their exclusion hardly desirable, or even justifiable; and, in truth, their beauties, by absorbing the attention and the feelings, render the objection in such instances of less importance. Hence an advantage enjoyed by the sacred compositions of Addison, Watts, Doddridge, Cowper. Hence an unspeakable addition to the effect of our Saviour's discourses. Imagine, for a moment, if you can, what would be your feelings in reading them, if you were, in idea, to divest the sublime preacher of his pure and holy character. Admirable and perfect as they are, you would read them with comparative indifference, if not with aversion. How different this from the feelings, which we actually experience! The character of our great Teacher communicates to his precepts and exhortations a divine unction, which renders them indescribably impressive and interesting; we attend to them with a constant impression, that they are the effusions of unmingled, celestial goodness; and it is our own fault, if their benign influence upon our hearts and lives is not complete.

Though it is inconceivable, that we should be without all associations of the kind in question, yet, from negligence, perversity, or some other cause, they are often very different from what they should be. We are, in this as in other respects, much more subject than is necessary to the power of chance and accident; we adopt too readily the representations of partiality, of prejudice, of illiberality, of wantonness; we listen to the suggestions of jealousy and ill-humour; we permit the faults of a character to occupy too much of our attention, to swell and multiply in our imagination, and to render us blind to all its excellencies, however great and numerous; we are, in one word, deficient in candour and charity, and are constantly offending against the precept, "judge not, that ye be not judged."

Associations, resulting from the indulgence of our evil propensities, are all wrong. They are particularly unjustifiable, when the object of them is a teacher of morality and religion; for they oppose and frustrate his pastoral ministrations, the success of which depends essentially on the light in which he is regarded, or, in other words, on the character he sustains. If reputation is valuable to all, it is indispensable to a minister of the gospel. It is inseparably connected with his usefulness. Strip him of his fair fame, and you divest him of the power of promoting the improvement of his people. His supposed *badness* as a *man* would spoil his *goodness* as a *preacher*. What inducements, then, have the members of a society to guard the reputation of their minis-

ter! They must be miserably wanting to themselves, if, when calumny and detraction are at work upon it, they should look on with calm indifference; for it is less *his* property, than *their own*, which is assailed by the enemy. They might as well be *without* a minister, as *with* one whose character is gone. He can no more retain his power of edifying them by his prayers and teachings, than Samson did his strength, when shorn of his locks. Of this truth, no person, I presume, can be wholly insensible. But there are many who give reason to suspect, that, if they leave the character of their pastor for integrity and common honesty untouched, they esteem it of little importance what they think and say of him in other respects. Such persons need to be told, that they lie under a great mistake; for no impressions concerning him are entirely indifferent; favourable ones, of whatever kind, will aid his spiritual labours; unfavourable ones will obstruct them. If there be any thing observed or imagined in a minister, that is calculated to excite unpleasant emotions; if he be thought by his people to be tinctured with pride, ambition, or avarice; to be irritable and morose; to be cold, unsocial and reserved; to attend more than is proper to subjects not immediately connected with his clerical functions; to be deficient in attention to the members of his flock generally; to neglect the children of the society, whose affections and respect it is of so much importance to them that he should obtain; to display levity in his manners and conversation; to have, in short, any habit that is inconsistent with his sacred office;—their respect for him, and consequently his usefulness to them, are proportionably diminished. It is obvious, then, that such impressions should not be lightly and hastily adopted; and they will never be harboured without reason, or without many allowances for the imperfections of human nature, by a people, who duly consider of how much importance it is to *them*, that their minister should be a christian without reproach; that he should be esteemed for the propriety of his deportment, loved for his kindness and benignity, and venerated for his virtue, piety, and devotedness to his profession.

LAICUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

SIR,

THE discussion of important questions in theology is not confined to your much abused vicinity, but is carried on with great



interest in places at a distance from you. The number of serious religious inquirers is increasing, and the consequences of serious free inquiry are such as might be expected. Instances are not few of conversion from the orthodox to a more liberal faith, and of the surrender of the trinitarian for the unitarian belief. By the blessing of God the fair light of truth is spreading, believers are multiplying, and the best sort of engagedness in religion is manifesting itself.

As a specimen of the interest which, in various ways, displays itself in various parts of the country, I would mention a little pamphlet lately published at Greenfield, entitled, "*A Reply to a Letter from a Trinitarian to a Unitarian*," signed J. L.—By K. M." It contains but twenty duodecimo pages, written in a style of great conciseness and simplicity, and confined entirely to the argument; which is strongly stated with moderation and candour, and with no fault, I believe, except occasionally a too great compression, which renders it less clear than it might otherwise have been. Permit me to copy for your readers one or two passages, as specimens of this unpretending, but meritorious little work. The first is intended to prove the unsoundness of many trinitarian arguments, by showing, that they are equally applicable to other cases, where all acknowledge them to be absurd.

"According to the Trinitarian mode of reasoning, it would not be difficult to prove that some men are God. The impossibility of conceiving how it can be, and the apparent absurdities, which it involves, are, on this scheme, no objections. It is admitted to be a mystery. We read of some, who had authority to remit sins, and to retain them. 'None but God can pardon sin.' Therefore those men were God. We are informed of some who knew all things. 'None but God knoweth all things.' The conclusion is undeniable. It is to no purpose to urge, that those persons were ignorant of many things. It is admitted that they were, in their human nature. The passage in question proves, that they had another nature infinitely superiour. But 'is it true, that they knew all things.' 'I believe so, because the scriptures so testify.' We are told of some, that they are 'filled with all the fulness of God;' and that they are 'partakers of the divine nature.' The divine nature is doubtless that, which constitutes any being God; and whoever possesses this nature must be God. You may indeed prove, that they possess a very different nature. This is granted. We contend that they have two natures; and the passage under consideration, proves that they have the nature of God; in other words, that they are God. The apostle speaks of some, who 'will judge the world,' and even angels. But 'the judge of all is God.' And none can be

qualified for this work without divine attributes. We are also informed of some, who will sit on the throne with Christ, as he sits on the throne with the Father. But no mere creature can be exalted to this dignity and power. The Bible also expressly calls certain men gods. 'Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods.' This name is as sacred as any other; and the Bible doubtless calls beings by their right names; it calls them just what they are. Though this name is plural in the foregoing passage, it denotes only, the different persons in the godhead.

"You may object that the preceding expressions in proof of the divinity of men are found only once. True; but we are told, that the sacred writers 'doubtless expected to be believed, when they had once plainly asserted any thing.'

"You may also object, that the scriptures teach in other passages, that those men had not the attributes of God. But we answer, that all such passages relate to their human nature; and of course cannot prove, that they did not possess a divine nature. All that is said of their inferiority to God, does not disprove what evidently implies that they are God. You may further object, that the foregoing doctrine cannot be true. But this is making reason the judge in a case confessedly mysterious; and undertaking to determine what revelation must, or must not contain.

"Such appears to me to be the mode of reasoning, which Trinitarians adopt to support their theory."

The other passage is from the concluding paragraph.

"You observe, 'Unless God has knowingly falsified the truth, every part of his testimony must be perfectly true. If you doubt any part of it, you do not receive it. And if you do not receive it, you make God a liar, and yourself guilty of the sin of unbelief.' (pp. 14, 15.) Give me leave to say, that the Unitarian admits the testimony of God, as fully and as cheerfully, as the Trinitarian. There is no dispute respecting the *truth* of what God has said, but only respecting the *meaning* of it. The Unitarian understands his language in one sense; the Trinitarian, in another. Both cannot be right; but there seems to be no occasion to charge either with unbelief. To mistake a testimony is not to disbelieve it. To misunderstand the language of a witness is not to make him a liar. Insinuations of the vast importance of the Trinitarian scheme, and of the danger, attending the belief of the Unitarian doctrines, are very common. But, where let me ask, does the Bible intimate the importance of believing the former; or the danger of receiving the latter? Let a single passage be produced, which relates to this point, and I assure you, Unitarians will not disbelieve it. Cannot the Trinitarian system be supported, and sufficiently propagated, without the aid



of terror? In order to prevent men from leaving it, must they be convinced, if possible, that it is the only safe way? I do not admit, that an error on either side 'results in nothing better than denying the Lord that bought' us. (p. 15.) I have no doubt, that there are sincere Christians, and excellent men among those who believe, and those, who deny, the doctrine of the Trinity. To you it appears impossible, that both systems should be christianity. I admit, that the essence of christianity consists, not in what is peculiar to either; but in what is common to both; and I should have a much better opinion of the Trinitarian doctrine, if it allowed its votaries to cherish the same charitable feelings. It would almost seem, as if some of them would hardly consider salvation, as a gift worthy of being accepted, if the peculiarities of their scheme cannot be retained. Its exclusive spirit appears to me to indicate, that its origin is not heavenly; that it does not partake of the nature of the gospel; and that, in the progress of society, it will give place to a more liberal system."

It may be proper to add, that the writer of this pamphlet is understood to be one who was educated in the trinitarian faith, and for many years professed it; but having now, by a divine blessing on his studies, discerned his errors, is suffering not a little persecution from those who once called themselves his friends.

HAMPSHIRE.

#### RULES FOR ACQUIRING HABITUAL DEVOTION.

[Selected.]

If you be desirous to cultivate habitual devotion, endeavour, in the first place, to divest your minds of too great multiplicity of the cares of this world. The man who lives to God, in the manner in which I have been endeavouring to describe, lives to him principally, and loves and confides in him above all. To be solicitous about this world, therefore, as if our chief happiness consisted in it, must be incompatible with this devotion. *We cannot serve God and Mammon.* If we be christians, we should consider, that the great, and professed object of our religion, is the revelation of a future life, of unspeakably more importance to us than this transitory world, and the perishable things of it. As christians, we should consider ourselves as *citizens of Heaven*, and only *strangers and pilgrims here below*. We must, therefore, see, that, as christians, there is certainly required of us a considerable degree of indifference about this world, which was only intended to serve us as a passage to a better.

The Divine Being himself has made wise provision for lessening the cares of this world, by the appointment of one day in seven, for the purpose of rest and avocation from labour. Let us then, at least, take the advantage which this day gives us, of *calling off our eyes from beholding vanity*, and of *quickenning ourselves in the ways of God*.

This advice I would particularly recommend to those persons who are engaged in *arts, manufactures, and commerce*. For, highly beneficial as these things are in a political view, and subservient to the elegant enjoyment of life, they seem not to be so favourable to religion and devotion, as the business of *agriculture*; and for this reason, therefore, probably, among others, the Divine Being forbade commerce to the people of the Jews, and gave them such laws as are chiefly adapted to a life of husbandry. The husbandman is in a situation peculiarly favourable to the contemplation of the works of God, and to a sense of his dependence upon him. The rain from heaven, and various circumstances relating to the weather, &c. on which the goodness of his crops depends, he receives as from the hand of God, and is hardly sensible of any secondary, or more immediate cause. If he understand any thing of the principles of vegetation, and can account for a few obvious appearances upon what we call *the laws of nature*; these laws he knows to be the express appointment of God; and he cannot help perceiving the wisdom and goodness of God in the appointment; so that the objects about which he is daily conversant are, in their nature, a lesson of gratitude and praise.

Besides, the employment of the husbandman being, chiefly, to *bring food out of the earth*, his attention is more confined to the real wants, or at most the principal conveniencies of life; and his mind is not, like that of the curious artist and manufacturer, so liable to be fascinated by the taste of superfluities, and the fictitious wants of men.

Nor, lastly, does the business of husbandry so wholly engross a man's thoughts and attention, while he is employed about it, as many of the arts and manufactures, and as commerce necessarily does. And it should be a general rule with us, that the more *attention of mind* our employment in life requires, the more careful should we be to draw our thoughts from it, on the *day of rest*, and at other intervals of time set apart for devotional purposes. Otherwise, a worldly-minded temper, not being checked or controuled by any thing of a contrary tendency, will necessarily get possession of our hearts.

This brings me to the second advice, which is, by no means to omit stated times of worshipping God by prayer, public and pri-



vate. Every passion and affection in our frame is strengthened by the proper and natural expression of it. Thus frequent intercourse and conversation with those we love promotes friendship ; and so also the intercourse we keep up with God by prayer, in which we express our reverence and love of him, and our confidence in him, promotes a spirit of devotion, and makes it easier for the ideas of the Divine Being and of his providence, to occur to the mind on other occasions, when we are not formally praying to him. Besides, if persons whose thoughts are much employed in the business of this life had no time to set apart for the exercise of devotion, they would be in danger of neglecting it entirely ; at least, to a degree that would be attended with a great diminution of their virtue and happiness.

But, in order that the exercises of devotion may be the most efficacious to promote the true spirit and general habit of it, it is advisable, that *prayers* properly so called, that is, direct addresses to the Divine Being, be short. The strong feeling of reverence, love, and confidence, which ought to animate our devotions, cannot be kept up in such minds as ours through a prayer of considerable length ; and a tedious langour in prayer is of great disservice to the life of religion, as it accustoms the mind to think of God with indifference ; whereas, it is of the utmost consequence, that the Divine Being always appear to us an object of the greatest importance, and engage the whole attention of our souls. Except, therefore, in public, where prayers of a greater length are, in a manner, necessary, and where the presence and concurrence of our fellow-worshippers assist to keep up the fervour of our common devotion, it seems more advisable, that devotional exercises have intervals of meditation, calculated to impress our minds more deeply with the sentiments we express ; and that they be used without any strict regard to particular times, places, or posture of body.

This method of conducting devotional exercises, which makes them consist chiefly of meditation upon God and his providence, has in many cases several advantages over a direct address to God, which should peculiarly recommend it to those who are desirous to cultivate the genuine spirit of devotion. Among other advantages, and that not the least, in meditation the mind is not so apt to acquiesce in the mere *work done* (what the schoolmen call the *opus operatum*) as it is in formal prayer, especially when it is made of considerable length. So prone, alas ! is the mind of man to superstition, that hardly any thing can be prescribed to us, as a *means* of virtue, but we immediately acquiesce in it as an *end* ; and not only so, but the consequence of a punctilious observance of prayer, and other means of religion, is too often

made the foundation of a spiritual pride, and self-sufficiency, which is of a most alarming nature; being directly opposite to that deep humility and self-abasement, which is ever the predominant disposition of a mind truly devout. The sentiment corresponding to the language *stand by thyself, I am holier than thou*, is not, I am afraid, peculiar to the pharisaical Jew, or the Romish devotee. It infects many protestant religionists, being generated by similar causes. Rather than be liable to this, it is certainly better, far better, even to be less regular in our exercises of devotion. *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.*

3. In the course of your usual employment omit no proper opportunity of turning your thoughts towards God. Habitually regard him as the *ultimate cause*, and *proper author* of every thing you see, and the disposer of all events that respect yourselves or others. This will not fail to make the idea of God occur familiarly to your mind, and influence your whole conduct.

It is to be regretted, that the taste and custom of this country is such, that a person of a devotional turn of mind cannot indulge himself in the natural expression of it, even upon the most proper and just occasions, without exposing himself to the particular notice, if not the ridicule, of the generality of those who may be present; whereas could we decently and seriously express our gratitude to God upon every agreeable occurrence, and our resignation and submission to his will upon every calamitous event of life, it would tend greatly to strengthen the habit of *acknowledging God in all our ways*, and promote the spirit of devotion.

In no other country, I believe, whatever, neither among the Roman Catholics, nor Mahometans, have people, even the most fashionable and polite, any idea of being ashamed of their religion. On the contrary, they are rather ostentatious of it, and therefore they seem to have more than they are really possessed of; and this is the case with some, both of the established church, and among the dissenters in England. But, unfortunately, this outward shew of religion was carried to such a length, about a century ago, in this country, and was some times made to subserve such infamous purposes, that, I believe, the greater part of the most sincerely pious and humble christians, now make a point of exposing to the world, as little of the religion they have as possible; so that they are really possessed of much more than they seem to have. This I trust is the case with great numbers, who are little suspected of being particularly religious, because they are seldom or never heard to talk about it. And, upon the whole, while things are so unfortunately circumstanced, I think this extreme preferable to the other; as, of all things, the reproach of hypocrisy ought to be avoided with the utmost care.



4. In a more especial manner, never fail to have recourse to God upon every occasion of strong emotion of mind, whether it be of a pleasurable, or of a painful nature. When your mind is labouring under distressing doubts and great anxiety, or when you are any way embarrassed in the conduct of your affairs, fly to God, as your friend and father, your counsellor and your guide. In a sincere and earnest endeavour to discharge your duty, and to act the upright and honourable part, *commit your way unto him*, repose yourselves upon his providence, confiding in his care to over-rule every thing for the best, and you will find a great, and almost instantaneous relief. Your perturbation of mind will subside, as by a charm, and the storm will become a settled calm. Tumultuous and excessive joy will also be moderated by this means; and thus all your emotions will be rendered more equable, more pleasurable, and more lasting. And this is produced not by any supernatural agency of God on the mind, but is the natural effect of placing entire confidence in a being of perfect wisdom and goodness.

But the capital advantage you will derive from this practice will be, that the idea of God, being, by this means, associated with all the strongest emotions of your mind, your whole stock of devotional sentiments and feelings will be increased. All those strong emotions, now separately indistinguishable, will coalesce with the idea of God, and make part of the complex train of images suggested by the term, so that you will afterwards think of God oftener, and with more fervour than before; and the thought of him will have greater influence with you than ever.

5. In order to cultivate the spirit of habitual devotion, labour to free your minds from all consciousness of guilt and self-reproach, by means of a constant attention to the upright and steady discharge of the whole of your duty. In consequence of neglecting our duty, we become backward, as we may say, to make our appearance before God. We cannot look up to him with full confidence of his favour and blessing; and are, therefore, too apt to omit devotion entirely. Besides, we always feel an aversion to the exercise of *self-abasement* and *contrition*, which are all the sentiments that we can with propriety indulge in those circumstances; especially as we have a secret suspicion, that we shall, for some time at least, go on to live as we have done; so that rather than confess our sins, and continue to live in them, we choose not to make confession at all.

But this is egregious trifling, and highly dangerous. Thus, at best, all improvement is at a stand with us, if we be not going fatally backwards in our moral state. If this be our character (as I believe it is, more or less, that of a very great

number even of those I have called the better sort of the middle classes of men) let us in time, and in good earnest, cast off all our sins, negligencies, and follies by true repentance. Let us draw near, and *acquaint ourselves with God*, that we may be at peace. You can have no true peace, assurance, or satisfaction of mind in this life without it: for if you be of the class I am now referring to, it is too late for you to have a perfect enjoyment of a life of sin and dissipation. And between that kind of peace, or rather *stupor*, which those who are abandoned to wickedness, those who are wholly addicted to this world, and make it their sole end (or those who are grossly ignorant of religion) enjoy, and that *inward peace and satisfaction* which accompanies the faithful and earnest discharge of every known duty, there is no sufficient medium. You may go about seeking rest in this wide space, while your hearts are divided between God and the world, but you will find none; whereas the *fruit of righteousness*, of a sincere and impartial, though imperfect obedience to the law of God, is *peace and assurance for ever*.

6. To facilitate the exercise of devotion, cultivate in your minds just ideas of God with whom you have to do upon those occasions, and divest your minds as far as possible, of all superstitious and dishonourable notions of him. Consider him as the good father of the prodigal son, in that excellent parable of our Saviour. Let it sink deep into your minds, as one of the most important of all principles, that the God with whom we have to do is essentially, of himself, and without regard to any foreign consideration whatever, *abundant in mercy, not willing that any should perish, but that he had rather that all should come to repentance*, and then, notwithstanding you consider yourselves as frail, imperfect, and sinful creatures, and though you cannot help accusing yourselves of much negligence, folly, and vice, you may still approach him with perfect confidence in his readiness to receive, love, and cherish you, upon your sincere return to him.

In this light our Lord Jesus Christ always represented *his father and our father, his God and our God*. This is the most solid ground of consolation to minds burdened with a sense of guilt; and, what is of great advantage, it is the most natural, the most easy, and intelligible of all others. If once you quit this firm hold, you involve yourselves in a system, and a labyrinth, in which you either absolutely find no rest, and wander in uncertainty and horror; or if you do attain to any thing of assurance, it is of such a kind, and in such a manner, as can hardly fail to feed that *spiritual pride*, which will lead you to despise others; nay, unless counteracted by other causes, too often ends in a spirit of censoriousness, hatred, and persecution.



## MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

## EXTRACT FROM DR. DWIGHT.

I HAVE been much struck in reading the following passage from Dr. Dwight's Lectures, in which he accounts for the origin of the divine honours paid to Noah in the early ages of the world. It is forcible and just; and will be found still more so, if applied to account for the elevation of our Saviour to the rank of Deity.

"High veneration for any being, easily slides, in such minds as ours, into religious reverence: especially when it is publicly and solemnly expressed by ceremonies of an affecting and awful nature. When Noah, particularly, and his sons generally, had been often, and for a series of years, commemorated in this manner; the history of man has amply taught us, that it was no strange thing to find them ultimately raised to the rank and character of deities. This event would naturally take place the sooner, on account of the astonishing facts included in their singular history. The imagination, wrought up to enthusiasm and terror, while realizing the astonishing scenes through which they had passed, could hardly fail to lend its powerful aid towards this act of canonization, and would, without much reluctance, attribute to them a divine character. If we remember how much more willingly mankind have ever worshipped false gods, than the True One; we shall, I think without much hesitation, admit the probability of the account, which has been here given concerning this subject."

## COMPLAINTS OF A CORRUPT HEART.

To hear some Christians talk, one would imagine they thought it their duty, and a mark of sincerity and goodness, to be always complaining of corrupt and desperately wicked hearts, and consequently that they ought to have, or in fact should always have, such hearts to complain of. But let no man deceive himself. A wicked and corrupt heart is too dangerous a thing to be trifled with. I would not here be thought to discourage the humble sentiments every man should have of himself, under our present infirmities: But we may greatly wrong ourselves by a *false humility*; and whoever carefully peruseth the New Testament will find, that, however we are obliged to repent of sin, a spirit of

complaining and bewailing is not the spirit of the gospel; neither is it any rule of true religion, nor any mark of sincerity, to have a corrupt heart, or to be always complaining of such a heart. No: the gospel is intended to deliver us from all iniquity, and to purify us into a peculiar people zealous of good works, to sanctify us throughout in body, soul and spirit, that we may *now* be saints, may *now* have peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and at length be presented without spot or blemish before the presence of God. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, not that it might continue groaning in a state of corruption and wickedness, but that he might, even in this world, sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. And this is the invariable sense of revelation. Nevertheless it is manifestly true, that while we are in the body we shall be exercised with the infirmities and passions thereof. But this is not our corruption or wickedness, but the trial of our virtue and holiness in resisting and subduing every irregular appetite. And it is the real character of every true Christian, not that he feels he has a corrupt and wicked heart, but that he *crucifieth the flesh with the affections and lusts, and perfecteth holiness in the fear of the Lord*. A real Christian may say, my heart is weak, and my passion strong: but he is no real Christian, or the gospel hath not had its proper effects upon him, if he cannot at the same time truly say, I resist and restrain my passions, and bring them into captivity to the laws of reason and true holiness. Whatever is evil and corrupt in us we ought to condemn; not so as that it shall STILL remain in us; that we may ALWAYS be condemning it; but, that we may SPEEDILY reform, and be EFFECTUALLY delivered from it; otherwise certainly we do not come up to the character of the disciples of *Jesus Christ*.

J. Taylor on *Original Sin*.

DR. BEATTIE'S METHOD OF BEGINNING THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF HIS SON.

THE doctrines of religion I wished to impress on his mind, as soon as it might be prepared to receive them; but I did not see the propriety of making him commit to memory theological sentences, or any sentences, which it was not possible for him to understand. And I was desirous to make a trial how far his own reason could go in tracing out, with a little direction, the great and first principle of all religion, the being of God. The follow-



ing fact is mentioned, not as a proof of superiour sagacity in him (for I have no doubt that most children would in like circumstances think as he did), but merely as a moral or logical experiment.

He had reached his fifth [or sixth] year, knew the alphabet, and could read a little ; but had received no particular information with respect to the Author of his being : because I thought he could not yet understand such information ; and because I had learned from my own experience, that to be made to repeat words not understood is extremely detrimental to the faculties of a young mind. In a corner of a little garden, without informing any person of the circumstance, I wrote in the mould, with my finger, the three initial letters of his name ; and, sowing garden cresses in the furrows, covered up the seed, and smoothed the ground. Ten days after, he came running to me, and with astonishment in his countenance told me, that his name was growing in the garden. I smiled at the report, and seemed inclined to disregard it ; but he insisted on my going to see what had happened. Yes, said I, carelessly, on coming to the place, I see it is so ; but there is nothing in this worth notice ; it is mere chance : and I went away. He followed me, and, taking hold of my coat, said with some earnestness, it could not be mere chance ; for that some body must have contrived matters so as to produce it.—I pretend not to give his words, or my own, for I have forgotten both ; but I give the substance of what passed between us in such language as we both understood.—So you think, I said, that what appears so regular as the letters of your name cannot be by chance. Yes, said he, with firmness, I think so. Look at yourself, I replied, and consider your hands and fingers, your legs and feet, and other limbs ; are they not regular in their appearance, and useful to you ? He said, they were. Came you then hither, said I, by chance ? No, he answered, that cannot be ; something must have made me. And who is that something, I asked. He said, he did not know. (I took particular notice, that he did not say, as Rousseau fancies a child in like circumstances would say, that his parents made him.) I had now gained the point I aimed at : and saw, that his reason taught him, (though he could not so express it) that what begins to be must have a cause, and that what is formed with regularity must have an intelligent cause. I therefore told him the name of the Great Being who made him and all the world ; concerning whose adorable nature I gave him such information as I thought he could in some measure comprehend. The lesson affected him greatly, and he never forgot either it, or the circumstances that introduced it.

## FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

LINES ADDRESSED TO A LOVELY INFANT, EXPIRING IN ITS FATHER'S ARMS.

Go, gentle spirit, haste away,  
 From painful scenes of sin and woe,  
 Of sickness, sorrow, and decay,  
 To realms of joy, unknown below.  
 Dear, lovely babe, thy parent's heart  
 Would still detain thee lingering here;  
 But Jesus calls thee to depart;  
 His friendly summons thou must hear.  
 "Let little children come to me,  
 "Forbid them not:" the Saviour cried;  
 "Like these must every mortal be,  
 Who would in heaven with me abide."  
 O happy soul! unstained with sin,  
 In robes of innocence arrayed,  
 Thy heavenly joys will soon begin,  
 No more with cares or griefs allayed.

August 2, 1821.

## REVIEW.

## ARTICLE VIII.

*Sermons, chiefly of a Practical Nature. By the late ANTHONY FORSTER, A. M. Pastor of the second Independent Church in Charleston, S. C. To which is prefixed a Memoir of the Author's Life. Raleigh, N. C. J. Gales, 1821. pp. 335.*

**T**HE biography prefixed to these sermons is one of the most interesting articles, which has lately come under our notice. Whoever values religious freedom, and the virtues of independence, uprightness, and resolution; whoever loves to contemplate a mind depending on its own resources, and sustained by its own energies, throwing off the shackles of early prejudice, resisting the calls of worldly interest, and boldly searching for



truth, will read this narrative with no common satisfaction. We have room only for a brief and imperfect sketch, and shall confine ourselves more particularly to such parts as speak of Mr. Forster's conversion to the unitarian faith, and the circumstances of his connexion with the second Independent Church of Charleston.

He was born in North Carolina, in the year 1785, and educated at the University in that state. His father died during his childhood, and he was sent by his guardian, at twelve years of age to the preparatory school attached to the University. He passed through the collegiate course, and graduated five years afterwards.

At the solicitation of his friends he chose the profession of the law, and commenced the study. He did not, however, pursue it long, nor with much eagerness, for it seems never to have been congenial with his inclination and feelings. Even at this period he was more often seen with books of theology, than such as pertained to his adopted profession. His health, also, began to decline, and his sedentary and studious habits were evidently making rapid inroads upon a constitution naturally delicate and frail.

Admonished by these growing symptoms, and swayed by the wishes of his friends, he resolved to pursue a more active course of life, as the only probable means of restoring and preserving his health. With this view he was induced to accept an Ensign's commission in the army of the United States. He was stationed on the western frontier of Georgia, where he was promoted to a lieutenancy, and remained somewhat more than two years. He finally resigned his commission, and left the army. Being now without employment, and in a great measure without resources, he resumed the study of the law, under the direction of a practitioner in Milledgeville, Georgia. In this place he was attacked with a complaint, which, by the mismanagement of his physician, terminated in a violent nervous fever. It reduced him exceedingly, and was the origin of the disease, which finally wasted his frame and hastened his dissolution.

After a partial recovery from this sickness, he found himself too feeble to commence again his studies. He returned to his friends in North Carolina with the intention of travelling to the north; but in Virginia he had a relapse, and the season was so far advanced, that it was thought adviseable for him not to pursue his journey. He accordingly returned again to his friends, and on the invitation of his former guardian, Governor Smith, of North Carolina, he accepted the office of his private secretary.

In this occupation, however, he did not continue long. His early prepossessions in favour of theological studies had never forsaken him, and of late they had been growing stronger. His views had become more definite, and his love of the subject had increased. In short, he resolved to devote himself to a preparation for the ministry of the Gospel with as much earnestness and assiduity, as his health and means would permit. To advance this purpose he resigned his office of secretary to the governor, and accepted the situation of Assistant Teacher in the Raleigh Academy. His leisure hours he devoted to theological studies under the direction of the Rev. Dr. M'Pheeters, who was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, and Principal of the Academy.

He commenced preaching under a licence of the presbyterian church early in 1813, and devoted several months to gratuitous missionary labours in South Carolina and Georgia. Near the close of the year he was invited to take charge of the Independent Church at Wappetaw in South Carolina. This invitation he accepted, and soon afterwards removed from Raleigh with his wife, whom he had lately married. But on arrival, he found the representations, which had been made to him, so imperfectly realized, and his prospects so unpromising, that he felt it a duty to request a release from his engagement, proposing at the same time to remain through the winter. His request was granted with some reluctance, and after the stipulated time had expired the invitation was renewed. He still declined accepting it for reasons, which he thought important and satisfactory.

In the summer following he was invited to preach in the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, during a temporary absence of its stated pastor. His services were highly acceptable, and his amiable deportment and engaging manners endeared him to many, who became his warm and permanent friends. In the spring of the next year he was engaged to supply the place of the Rev. Dr. Hollinshead in the Independent Church in Charleston.\* The age and infirmities of Dr. Hollinshead, made him incapable of discharging any of his parochial duties, and rendered it improbable that he would ever resume his labours. Mr. Foster, therefore, "although chosen as a temporary supply merely, was vested with all the rights and privileges of a stated pastor, and authorized to perform all the duties and services incident to this office." He continued here through the summer, but in

\* "The Church, though incorporated as one body, consisted of two branches, meeting in two distinct places of worship, and served by two associate, or Colleague pastors, who officiated in the respective churches alternately, morning and evening."



the autumn he was attacked by an alarming hæmorrhage of the lungs, which disabled him from performing any of his pastoral duties. He did not resume his ministerial labours till the spring of 1816, and then in a state of great debility.

Before this time the death of Dr. Hollinshead had left a vacancy, which was to be filled by a permanent minister. At this crisis a series of events and circumstances happened, which brought to pass a separation of the Associated Churches, and the final settlement of Mr. Forster over that branch, which is now called the second Independent Church of Charleston. To have a clear understanding of this subject, it is necessary to state certain particulars respecting Mr. Forster's opinions, and the process by which he had been led to abandon some of his early impressions, and to change many of his theological sentiments. We cannot do this so well as in the expressive language of his biographer, who was intimately acquainted with him, and with the progress of his inquiries. The peculiar interest of the extract must be our apology for its length.

"Mr. Forster was educated a Calvinist, and in a community where any mode of faith materially differing from the formulas of the Genevan Reformer, was almost unknown, and where faith, to be valuable, must have been implicit. In this situation, the leading doctrines of this system were adopted by him, as they doubtless are by most others under similar circumstances, as articles to be believed, not as principles to be discussed and investigated. It is certainly no matter of wonder that men, even of powerful and independent minds, who have been taught from the first dawning of reason to associate all personal piety with a particular form of doctrine should come, at length, habitually to consider them as actually inseparable, and thus to contemplate this form of doctrine as equally unquestionable with the reality of religious feelings and principles themselves. That such is the view taken of this particular system by very many of those who adopt it, admits of no question. And such seems to have been the light in which the subject was viewed by Mr. Forster previously to his entering on the ministry, and for some time afterwards.

"To examine with a fearless love of truth the foundation of those dogmas for which their votaries claim the exclusive title of *orthodoxy*, made no part of the estimate he had formed of his official duty. How should it? He had grown up in the habit of considering them as first principles—as axioms in the science of religion—beyond which, inquiry was useless, at least, if not pernicious. On these doctrines he had never, according to his own statement, entertained any doubts until long after he became a preacher.

"What first awakened his inquiry on these topics, and induced him to enter seriously into an examination of them, was the anxiety he felt

in behalf of an intimate friend, who was a professed Unitarian. His acquaintance with this person had commenced when he was a student of theology ; and they had held occasional conversations on religion ; but never, as it would seem, entered very fully or minutely into the discussion of these disputed topics. Mr. Forster, of course, regarded his friend's opinions as essentially and fatally erroneous. Still he entertained a high respect for his general character, and felt a warm interest in his welfare.

"After his settlement in Charleston, he determined to communicate to this friend in writing, what he intended should be a full refutation of his errors. To enable himself the more effectually to accomplish this, he determined to consult some of the principal unitarian writers, in order to ascertain what were the objections, which it would be necessary to obviate, and the arguments, which it would be incumbent on him to refute ; nothing doubting of his competency to perform both the one and the other. But he had not proceeded far in this course, ere he felt his confidence shaken, and his apprehensions seriously alarmed.

"What first excited his surprise, as he often remarked to the writer of this Memoir, and created some degree of doubt in his mind as to the correctness of his former impressions, in their fullest extent at least, was the evident candour, love of truth, and singleness of heart, which characterize these writers. He had been accustomed to consider them as emissaries of Satan—foes to truth—at once the votaries and the victims of fatal delusions ; idolatrous of their own powers, and of undevout and unsubdued spirits. But he found in their writings, as he acknowledged, no traces of this character. These exhibited no evidences of perverted intellect or depraved affections ; but very many of an opposite kind. He found, too, as he proceeded, that they had much more to offer in behalf of their peculiar opinions, and this far more plausible too, than he had previously imagined. He was not long in coming to the conclusion, that men of upright minds might differ very materially in their views of religious truth ; and that pious affections might consist with the disbelief even of those doctrines, which he had been in the habit of regarding as essential to the christian character. His first lesson, therefore, was a lesson of charity, and it produced a deep and lasting impression on his mind. Its influence was visible during the whole of his remaining life. He was accustomed often to look back with unmingled disapprobation on what had once been the state of his feelings on this subject, and with devout gratitude to God, who had dispelled the cloud of bigotry and prejudice by which he had been enveloped.

"But he had not arrived at this conclusion without many painful struggles, and many misgivings of mind. To admit that those views of religious truth with which he had identified his pious affections and devout aspirations, and to which he had attached his faith and his hopes, were other than essential ; that they were questionable, and



might be found erroneous; was attended with extreme uneasiness. He felt, to use his own expression, as if the ground were sinking beneath his feet. His faith and confidence were shaken, and he knew not when or where they might again settle on a firm and secure footing. Such were his feelings under the first influence of the new light, which was let in upon his mind, that, at times, his eyes were unvisited by sleep. He had every inducement, which worldly prudence could suggest, to desist from the inquiry, and quench the light, which was kindling within him. A change of opinion on these topics, he was well aware, would probably be followed by loss of employment in his profession, by the alienation of his friends; by misrepresentation, reproach, and calumny; by persecution, in short, in every variety of shape, which bigotry, since deprived of the power of the sword, so well knows how to assume. But his mind was not of a character to yield to such considerations as these. However painful the process, he felt himself compelled to go forward. He regarded the questions as of vast importance, and determined to give them a thorough and impartial examination.

"Justly considering the doctrine of the Trinity as the keystone of the popular system, he began with this. His recourse was, as it ought to be, to the scriptures, which he read carefully and critically, availing himself, as occasion required, of such collateral assistance, as his situation enabled him to procure. He proceeded with great deliberation, and with the sober and conscientious earnestness of a man, who feels that more than life is staked on the result of his investigations. He certainly did not lightly abandon the system, to which early prejudices, and powerful associations had bound him. He relinquished not a foot of ground till he felt that it was all untenable. His investigation was long and laborious; but the final result of it was a full and entire conviction, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not a doctrine of the scriptures. This conviction became continually stronger and deeper the further his inquiries were extended, and the more minutely they were pursued. A full persuasion of the strict and unqualified unity of God, of the essential benignity of his character, of his paternal and *impartial* benevolence towards all his rational offspring, of the efficacy of sincere repentance to restore the sinner to his favour, of the absolute *freeness* of his unpurchased compassion toward erring man, and of the certainty of a future, just and impartial retribution,—these were the important conclusions to which Mr. Forster's inquiries conducted him. These he believed to comprize the substance of that revelation, which God had made to man by his beloved Son. To that Son he looked up with love, and gratitude, and veneration, but his *worship* he reserved for his Father and our Father, for his God and our God, in obedience to the direction of Jesus himself,—“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve,” and believing with St. Paul, that “there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” On the foundation of this faith he was



content to rest his hopes for eternity ; and it was a foundation, which the experience of his subsequent life, often amidst circumstances trying and afflictive in no ordinary degree, proved to be firm and unfailling.

“ This imperfect sketch of the history of our author’s mind during the progress of this important change in his opinions, it is believed may not be altogether uninteresting or useless to others in similar circumstances. Few men have been possessed of more vigorous, more upright, or more independent minds, than Mr. Forster. Yet the prejudices of education, and the prevalent mistakes industriously propagated by the bigots and religionists of the day, regarding the character and tendency of Unitarianism, effectually deterred him from the examination of a system, the evidences of the truth of which he afterwards found, when circumstances awakened his attention to the subject, so clear, so convincing, so irresistible.”—pp. xiii—xvii.

Such was the course of investigation pursued by Mr. Forster, such the obstacles he encountered, and such the result of his inquiries. When we consider the nature and strength of his early impressions, the unbending power of habit, and his zeal in favour of his first opinions ; when we recollect that he resolved on the work of inquiry almost alone, without the advice and counsel, or the sympathy and encouragement of others ; and when we remember that every thing was at stake, that every step he took carried him so much further from his worldly interest, the confidence of his former associates, the affections of many of his friends, and exposed him to the reproaches of the illiberal, and the suspicions of the wise,—when we bring to mind these circumstances in all their bearings, we cannot but admire the many high and excellent traits of mind, which they imply, his firmness, his purity of intention, his noble sacrifice of every selfish motive and feeling at the sacred shrine of principle and truth. With the Bible for his guide he felt secure. He was fearless in pursuing the course in which he believed the revealed word of God conducted him. No temporal considerations could turn him aside. Thus determined, he was unwearied in his search, resolute in maintaining what he conceived to be the pure doctrines of the gospel, and finally triumphant over those, who would bind him to other rules of faith than the scriptures, and to other modes of practice, than such as were approved by his own conscience.

When Mr. Forster commenced the ministry he was a Presbyterian, and afterwards joined himself to a Presbytery. But it is not to be supposed, that changes so radical could have taken place in his mind without his views of church government being materially altered. At a very early period of his inquiries he resolved to withdraw from the Presbytery to which he belonged.



In a letter to the moderator, making known this determination, he stated, among other reasons, which prompted him to this measure, "the inconsistency of this system of Church government with our civil institutions, with our habits, and our mode of thinking on other topics ; its establishment of a tribunal, by whose decisions the exercise of private judgment is fettered, and by which a difference of *opinion* might be treated as involving as much crime as a violation of moral duty." These sentiments were more fully expressed, according to his biographer, in his pulpit exercises at this time. In his sermons he repeatedly asserted the sufficiency of the scriptures as a standard of faith, urged the necessity of appealing to these alone, and cautioned his hearers not to be deceived by the devices of men, nor any schemes of human contrivance. He taught them that religion is an individual personal concern, and that the conviction of private judgment is the only safe criterion of religious truth.

To preach such sentiments as these to a society, which, from its foundation, had been chained to a written creed distinct from the Bible, could not but excite much attention. Some would be awakened by their novelty, others by their boldness, and others by their simplicity and truth. So it turned out ; and while many were edified and delighted with views, which bore the stamp of so much good sense and reason, other more sagacious ones at length discovered that the preacher was going sadly astray from the beaten track of their fathers, and was unceremoniously reducing the borders of their faith within the narrow compass of the Bible. He had not yet it is true, attacked any of the peculiar tenets of their superadded formulas, but he had advanced principles, which rendered them unnecessary, nay, which proved them false and pernicious. In the general tenour of his preaching while his opinions were changing, Mr. Forster exercised his accustomed prudence, in avoiding all topics on which his own mind was unsettled. He judged rightly in supposing it inexpedient and unprofitable to agitate the minds of his people, and stir up their passions by discussing subjects from which he had not yet himself been able to remove the clouds of doubt. He felt it a duty to be deliberate in his investigations, and to decide only upon the fullest evidence, and the firmest conviction. This required time. He preached with great earnestness the necessity of religious inquiry, and of a plain, scriptural faith, because he considered these points thoroughly established, and because, if duly heeded, they would lead to a just estimate and accurate knowledge of a christian's belief and duty.

"In this state of mind, had he not already been engaged in the ministry, he might probably have deferred, for a time, his entrance



into it. But now the case was far different. The question presented for his decision was, what course he ought to pursue in a situation in which Providence had placed him, and from which, had he been so disposed, he could hardly have felt himself at liberty to retire. For, notwithstanding the apprehensions awakened in the minds of some by the tenour of his discourses, the great majority of his hearers were not only warmly attached to him as a man, and as a pastor, but perfectly satisfied on the score of his religious opinions. Many—and it ought to be mentioned to the credit of their liberality—even of those, who still retained their attachment to that system of doctrines, with regard to which the foundations of his faith were shaken, were nevertheless disposed to allow him the right of speculating for himself, and to admit, that, though his views should differ from their own on some points, they might still be profited and edified by his ministrations." p. xx.

Such were the state of Mr. Forster's opinions, the character of his preaching, and the feelings of the people, when the death of Dr. Hollinshead left a vacancy, which was to be filled with a permanent pastor. Mr. Forster had many friends, who were resolved to rest their choice on him; but after what has been detailed, it may readily be imagined, that this point could not be effected with unanimity, if at all, and more especially, when it is understood by what kind of a bond the society was held together.

"According to the constitution of the society, every pastor was required, *on his election*, to subscribe to the creed and articles of the church in extenso; which creed was avowedly grounded on the confession and catechism of the Westminster Divines. It is necessary further to premise that this church, in common with most others of the class denominated Independents, in the United States, presents, in its organization, the strange anomaly in ecclesiastical affairs, of a sort of imperium in imperio—a kind of inner and outer court, like the Jewish sanctuary—the former comprising those only, who are in the habit of participating in the Lord's Supper; and the latter, those who are not. These distinct, yet united bodies, are usually designated by the terms *church* and *congregation*. What was the origin of this distinction, or what have been its consequences to the interests of practical godliness, this is not the place to inquire. But by the constitution of this society, the whole body of voters could not proceed to an election of a pastor, until the *church* had first determined, that it was expedient so to do." p. xxii.

A religious society, thus organized, was not in a condition to act with much harmony in a case like the present; nor can such a system be defended on any principles of good government, or by the precepts of Christ, or the example of the apostles.

When the day of election arrived, and the subject was brought before the *church* in its separate capacity, it was stated by some



individuals, that in a private conversation with Mr. Forster, he had not satisfied them with the soundness of his faith. This statement put a stop to any further proceedings. The deliberations of the church terminated in appointing a committee to ascertain from Mr. Forster, whether, if elected, he would subscribe the creed and articles. This question was put to him in writing. But he very promptly declined answering it, on the ground that it was premature and out of place. Its obvious tendency was to impose an obligation on him without any thing corresponding on the part of the society. It was, also, inconsistent with their constitution, which required subscription *on election*, and not before. In his reply, therefore, he did not think proper to answer this question in direct terms, but he explained his views at large respecting the propriety and expediency in a clergyman of subscribing any human system of articles, and the right of a society to demand such a subscription. He, furthermore, made them fully understand, that he should decline, as it is expressed in his own language, "to accept of any pastoral charge, but such as should be offered to him on the principles of the gospel." This reply was published, and bears ample testimony to his independence, and his appreciation of religious liberty.

But it was not calculated to satisfy those, who insisted on a declaration of his faith in creeds, and who wished to extort a promise that he would subscribe. In short, it soon appeared, that a large portion of the society would not vote for him. His friends, however, constituted a majority, and foreseeing that a choice could not be effected without much opposition, they proposed a plan at the next meeting of the society by which they hoped all difficulties might be adjusted, and their wishes gratified in having Mr. Forster for their minister. They suggested an arrangement by which each minister might officiate statedly in one of the churches, and thus allow all the members the privilege of listening to the preacher of their choice. To this proposal the opposite party would not assent. Much debate ensued, and after several of Mr. Forster's friends, weary and exhausted with the discussion, had retired, a resolution was passed by a small majority, which dissolved his connexion with the society.

Thus excluded from both of the churches belonging to the society, Mr. Forster's friends immediately procured a public hall as a temporary place of worship, in which he officiated for several sabbaths. In the mean time, another meeting of the society was called, which was fully attended by both parties. After much warmth of discussion, a motion was made for a separation of the society, and was carried. A joint committee was appoint-

ed to draw up articles of separation, which were reported, and unanimously accepted.

“As soon as this separation had taken place, the friends of Mr. Forster, to whom the church in Archdale Street had been assigned, took measures for their regular organization as a christian society, under the name of the *Second Independent Church of Charleston*. Discarding the use of all formularies and systems of man's invention, they declared the scriptures, and the scriptures alone, to be the rule of their faith and practice; leaving every individual to the free and uncontrolled exercise of his own judgment and conscience in the interpretation of the sacred volume.

“As soon as their organization was completed, Mr. Forster was unanimously elected to the office of their pastor.” p. xxvi.

Few occurrences in any man's life could be more trying, than those which happened to Mr. Forster during the transactions of which we have given a hasty outline. But throughout the whole, the peculiar traits of his character were never obscured. He was cool and unruffled, firm and resolute. He sustained the dignity of an upright and pious mind in the midst of many causes of excitement and irritation. He was true to his principles, and to his friends. Alone, and without the co-operation of a solitary individual of his profession, he resolutely asserted and defended religious liberty, and the rights of conscience, on the broad principles of the scriptures, and of reason. By his rational views and sound judgment, by his discreet deportment, and christian life and spirit, in the space of a very few months he insensibly changed the views and released from error a large and respectable society, and established it in harmony and peace on the solid basis of an enlightened faith, and gospel freedom. And what adds to the wonder, these things were accomplished while his own opinions were yet unsettled, and while he was patiently pursuing investigations to satisfy himself on several important topics. We doubt whether an example can be found, where so remarkable effects of this nature have been produced in so short a time, by an unaided individual, and under circumstances so unfavourable and disheartening.

But Mr. Forster was not destined long to reap the fruits of his labours and sacrifices, or to enjoy the grateful attentions of a united and most affectionate people. His health soon after began more rapidly to decline. He sought relief in travelling and exercise, and with some apparent temporary benefit. At one time he thought himself nearly recovered, but his visions of hope were but visions, and they soon vanished. He preached, indeed, but a small portion of the time after he was settled, and in March, 1819, he delivered his last discourse. He preached from the



text, *The Lord is risen indeed*. It was on the day for celebrating the Lord's supper. "Few, who were present on this occasion," says his biographer, "can soon lose the deep and pathetic impression of the scene. The interesting nature of the celebration, the eloquence of the discourse, and the colouring evidently thrown over some of the topics by the peculiar situation and feelings of the speaker—his figure pale and emaciated, and so feeble that he could with difficulty sustain himself during the service—all these circumstances, combined with the melancholy and irresistible conviction that he was listening for the last time, in that place, to the sound of that voice, rendered this one of the most touching scenes, which the writer has ever witnessed." Soon after this, his friends persuaded him to make another trial of a change of air, and he went with his family to Raleigh. Here he was soon confined to his bed, and after an almost insensible decline, for about nine months, his spirit took its flight on the 18th of January, 1820.

Mr. Forster died as he had lived, sustained by his religious hopes, and relying with unshaken confidence on the promises of the gospel. His faculties were unimpaired till the last, and he was perfectly aware of his situation. The approaches of death were silent, but they were not concealed; and he watched them unmoved. His mind found its peace in a region where the accidents of time could not reach. His frame was exhausted, and his powers of bodily action had nearly ceased, but his mind was vigorous and active—resigned and cheerful under the afflictive hand of providence, and tranquil in its contemplation of futurity. The consoling views of religion, to which his patient and earnest studies had led him, were his strength and his comfort when all things else had failed him. In life they had been his support, and his peace in many trying scenes; they divested death of its terrors, and illumined the night of the grave with the beams of hope and of joy.

From what has been said, the prevailing traits of Mr. Forster's character will have been discovered. We will add a few words more from the apparently impartial and discriminating testimony of his biographer.

"He was endowed by nature with great boldness, decision, and independence of character. His perceptive powers were unusually quick, clear, and strong; and his purposes equally simple and direct. He took his impressions of truth and duty from no man upon trust. He acted under a deep sense of his own personal responsibility for his opinions and his conduct; and every thing was with him subjected to the test of rigid and unbending principle. Yet was there nothing of obstinacy, of dogmatism, or self-sufficiency in his temper. No

man listened with more patience or docility to argument from whatever quarter ; no man could be more free from the folly of a pertinacious adherence to his own opinions, merely because they were his own.

“ But perhaps the most prominent feature in his mind was his strong and discriminating good sense. This was apparent in every thing that he did, and in every thing that he said, and stamped a strong and distinctive character of fitness and decorum on all his transactions. His insight into the characters of others was remarkably keen and unerring ; his judgment was rarely imposed on by hollow pretensions and specious professions.

“ As a minister of the gospel, his qualifications were of a high order. While his talents and his virtues commanded the respect of his people, his manners irresistibly attached him to their affections. Few men have been more ardently beloved while living, or lamented, when dead, with a more heartfelt sorrow.” p. xxx.

The sermons, which constitute much the largest part of the volume under consideration, are twenty-two in number, and chiefly on practical subjects. They were printed from the author's manuscripts after his death. These we have perused with pleasure. They exhibit, in a most favourable light, the characteristics of the author's mind, his cautious boldness and decision, his clearness of perception, and above all, his piety, and amiable and gentle temper. In our view they have many of the requisites of good sermons ; by which we mean such sermons, as will produce impressions on the hearers and readers, make them thoughtful and serious, console them in affliction, lead them to a just value of religious attainments, and to a knowledge and love of duty. We cannot envy the sensibility, or the moral feelings of the person, who can read these discourses without being made better.

They are particularly to be commended for a lucid arrangement. We take occasion to mention this the rather, as the *lucidus ordo*, which the ancients thought so essential to a finished composition, seems little to be thought of by many of our modern sermonizers. The old English divines were scrupulous on this point, and undoubtedly carried it to excess. The divisions and subdivisions became a labyrinth, which it would baffle the expertest logicians to unravel. Even Tillotson, who is usually perspicuous, sometimes runs into this fault. No one, perhaps, has excelled Barrow in a clear and philosophical method. Some of his sermons are models in this respect. They are composed with a rhetorical accuracy, which may be compared to advantage with the best specimens of ancient oratorical compositions. The Puritans in this as in every thing else, had a way of their own. They strung one head upon another in an almost endless pro-



gression. To ascend to *fortythirdly*, with an improvement of half as many divisions, was but a common effort of skill and invention; and even ourselves, in these degenerate days, have listened to a worthy covenanter till he has carried us up to *seventeenthly*. We came away confused, and with little else in our heads, than a din of numerical adverbs.

But there is a medium, which every preacher should study to attain. The French sermon writers have hit upon this with tolerable success. Little good can be done by preaching, unless it make impressions; and this depends quite as much on the manner in which ideas are introduced to the mind, as on the strength and appropriateness of the ideas themselves. The confused and disconnected mode of preaching, which is practised by some, is but ill calculated to answer this end. Of the printed discourses to which this character will apply, we presume few will stand higher on the list, than Maturin's. It is better that the divisions of a discourse should be few, than many, yet still there should be some clear, distinct points, which the mind can easily apprehend at the time, and to which it can afterwards recur and take up the chain of its associations. The memory will then do its office, and the preacher's labours will not have been entirely vain. To accommodate the condition of most christian audiences, it is important, that the speaker should submit to a little form in dividing and arranging his discourse. The manner in which this shall be done may be varied. Some art may be exercised even here. It will seldom be found advantageous to give a syllabus of the discourse at the outset. The curiosity of the hearers will thus be too soon satisfied. They will be contented with imagining how this outline is to be filled up, and their thoughts will be wandering. It is generally better to let each part open gradually, and to keep the topics themselves in reserve, till the time comes to illustrate and enforce them. We only urge, that there should be an outline at least in the speaker's own mind, and that this should comprize a certain number of distinct topics.

Some of the best examples of what we regard happy method are Archbishop Secker, Porteus, perhaps Blair, and especially Logan. Dr. Priestley and George Walker are methodical, but they took so little pains to make it appear, that their method will frequently escape superficial readers, and it could not always have been perfectly obvious to listless hearers. The late Dr. Lathrop, of West Springfield, was a clear and accurate sermon writer. Few have been more fertile in topics, or more ingenious and methodical in bringing them together. When he erred, it was rather from abundance, than poverty. The sermons of Dr. John

Clarke we would also rank among the best specimens of judicious method.

Now this is a branch of the art in which we think Mr. Forster particularly excelled. His divisions are never numerous, but they are apt and natural. It was his custom to seize on a small number of leading points, and make all his remarks bear on these. His general subject was always kept in view. To very few of his discourses can you apply any other texts, than those which he has affixed to them. His whole aim seems to have been to make his hearers understand him, and receive and feel the impressions, which were bearing upon his own mind. Every thing is undisguised, direct, and earnest. He manifestly spoke from his own convictions, and let his hearers into the feelings of his own heart.

We shall make two or three extracts, which may serve to show the author's general manner of writing. The first is from a discourse on the text, *We walk by faith, and not by sight*, and alludes in part to the organization of his society.

"A veneration for supposed authority, for the pretended claims of antiquity, and for the imposing demands of a false, mistaken sanctity, has proved the means of much injury to the cause of truth. The beautiful simplicity of the gospel, the harmonious features of evangelical doctrine, have been distorted into a thousand deformities, to which nothing could have given permanency under the name of religion, but the most unhappy prejudices of education, the pusillanimous apprehensions of private interest, and the ambitious zeal of sectarianism.

"But these are the errors, which, in the face of the world, and under the eye of heaven, we have been enabled to renounce. Yes, my brethren, with all the love of truth, I trust, which distinguished so many in the sixteenth century, and with a more pious prudence than at that time prevailed, we have pronounced the glorious work which then commenced, and which shook to the foundation the false pretensions of ecclesiastical authority, to be unfinished. We have exalted the scriptures to that eminence, which divine Providence originally decreed they should occupy. We have asserted the primeval and necessary freedom of the mind. We have burst the manacles with which conscience had so long been enchained. And for what purpose, my brethren, has all this been done? Verily that we might follow the evangelists and the apostles so far as they followed Christ. For what purpose has the divine approbation attended us in every step, inspiring us with comfort and strength above every attempt at opposition? Verily, that we might more thoroughly learn to *walk by faith and not by sight, through evil, as well as through good report.*" p. 106.



"Moral truth is unchangeable in its nature, and must exist forever the same in every age, and under every circumstance. Yet it would appear to be otherwise with respect to Christian faith. The doctrines of the apostles, and the doctrines of many who call themselves their successors, vary extremely from each other. In the days of evangelical simplicity, before the meekness and humility of Jesus were forgotten, a solemn profession of faith in him as the Messiah, or a sincere acknowledgment of the divine authority of his religion, was all that was considered necessary, together with a consistency of external deportment, to introduce members into his church. But no sooner had civil authority, and popular influence professedly enlisted themselves on the side of Christianity, than a door was opened for innovation, and protection was allowed to error. The visionary speculations of heathen philosophy were made to intermingle with the doctrines of the gospel. The scriptures were distorted to sanction the imposition. Mysteries were made to appear where no mysteries existed. And perplexities and absurdities were cherished, at which unclouded reason, and uncorrupted revelation would equally revolt. The glory of heaven was obscured, and the standard of truth so immersed in darkness, that appeals were made to a plurality of voices to ascertain what men should, and what they should not believe." p. 202.

We here see something of the author's characteristic boldness and decision. This language does not betray a mind like that of Tertullian, who was the more induced to believe a thing *because it was impossible*; nor like Dionysius of Alexandria, who *admired a doctrine the more because he could not understand it*; nor like the good Bishop of London, who thought it necessary to *prostrate his reason*, before he could have a *rational* understanding of divine truth. The views advanced above are familiar to most of our readers; but let it be remembered, that they were adopted by Mr. Forster under every discouragement, and advanced at a time when they exposed him to much evil report and real injury.

The following is taken from among other reflections on the motives for confidence in divine providence.

"Another source, whence reflections may be drawn, calculated to strengthen our confidence in providence, is one to which our text immediately refers. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice? Here is a direct appeal to the past, and a conclusion drawn from experience in favour of future providence. Suffer me then to exhort you seriously to meditate on the days that are gone. The most of us, if not all, have lived long enough in the world to learn wisdom from our experience, and to behold the hand of providence conducting us through the scenes which are no more to return. And to aid you in this

useful meditation, I would, were I able, and time would permit, summon before you the circumstances that are past, and reconduct you through the scenes in which you have acted your parts. I would remind you of the storms, that have passed over your heads, and of the snares and pitfalls of destruction by which you have been safely conducted. I would lead you into the chambers of sickness and of death, and recal to your memory the tears, which you have shed over suffering humanity and departed worth. I would invite you to the silent repository of those who are sleeping for eternity, and point out to you the mouldering remains of such as were dear to your hearts. And I would then ask you why it was, that the storms which passed over your heads left you unhurt? What unseen power preserved you in the midst of dangers concealed, and secret destruction? How you continued to enjoy health, while others languished on beds of pain? And how it is, that the cold bosom of the earth has not yet received you? I would ask you this, and were there no one else to proclaim the truth, the silent tombs would burst forth in eloquence, and all nature would conspire to swell the strain, that the hand of providence has been with you, and God himself has watched over you." p. 87—89.

The best discourse in the collection, perhaps, is the one on a *particular providence*. The arguments are well chosen and well sustained, and the style is on the whole more uniformly unexceptionable, than in most of the other discourses. The sermon on *prayer*, which makes the fifteenth in the selection, we have read with much delight. It displays the amiable traits of the author's character, his piety, and tenderness of heart, in the most engaging light, at the same time it presents some of the strongest motives for devout addresses to the Deity.

Although we have found much to admire and commend in this volume of sermons, we do not think them faultless. There are some inaccuracies of style, which might have been improved. All errors of this sort, however, as far as we have observed, are more the result of inattention, than want of judgment or taste. We do not remember a single instance of what may be called a fault of affectation or ambition. Much more serious defects, than any we have discovered, might indeed be expected in the writings of almost any author under similar circumstances. "It ought, in justice to the author's reputation," says his biographers, "to be remembered, that these discourses were composed not only with no thought of their future publication, but composed, many of them at least, under great depression of spirits and languor of mind, the result of corporeal debility and suffering." When these things are considered, it would be with an ill grace, that the voice of criticism should be harsh or querulous; and we have much more reason to be surprised at the fewness than the frequency of faults.



The biographical notice prefixed to this work has much merit, both as a literary performance, and a judicious selection of the most interesting particulars of Mr. Forster's life. His conversion, with its consequences, was an event of no ordinary occurrence, and an era in the history of unitarianism, which will never be forgotten while the spirit of Christian truth and the love of religious freedom remain; and we rejoice that the task of recording this event has fallen into hands so well qualified to do it justice.

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ARTICLE IX.

*The Racovian Catechism, with Notes and Illustrations, translated from the Latin: To which is prefixed a Sketch of the History of Unitarianism in Poland and the adjacent Countries.*  
By THOMAS REES, F. S. A. 12mo. London, 1818.

IN considering the objections and charges that are brought against Unitarianism, it is surprising to find how few of them are derived from the Sacred Scriptures. The appeal is made to the Bible, it is true, but much oftener to popular prejudices and ecclesiastical history. Who is ignorant of the manner in which it is commonly opposed from our pulpits and in the pamphlets of the day? Odious names and epithets are attached to it. Much is said, without even a shadow of proof, of the hollowness of its principles, its want of vitality, and its latitudinarian tendencies. Suspensions are also cast upon the piety, sincerity and moral strictness of its professors. All the errors and extravagances of those, who have ever held the leading doctrine of the unitarians, are charged more or less directly upon the whole body. Especially the obnoxious opinions, that are known to have been held by some of its distinguished advocates, but which had no necessary connexion with their belief in that system, are represented as essential to it. In fine, the imposing authority of numbers, influence and antiquity is set up against it; and men affect to look down upon it with contempt as "the reverie of a few moderns."

We admit that in our own section of the country, and among the more learned and respectable opponents of this doctrine, a change has taken place for the better in conducting the controversy. But we deceive ourselves if we suppose that

this change has extended far or affected many. The great body of trinitarians regard Unitarianism still as they always have done; oppose it in the same way, and bring against it the same objections. And it is to no purpose for us to say, that these objections are utterly unfounded—frivolous in the extreme. It is a fact that they do exist in the minds of thousands—exerting there a mighty influence, and contributing more than any other cause, or than all other causes together, to retard the progress of unitarian views. How then are these objections to be removed? We answer, by giving a plain and full history of Unitarianism from the beginning of the world to the present time. The interests of truth call loudly for such a work, and in the present state of things we know of nothing that would do so much for the advancement and ultimate triumph of pure and undefiled religion.

Such a work would furnish us with a perfect answer to every one of the objections and charges hinted at above—an answer, which all could understand—an answer, which all would feel. The writer would show that Unitarianism, so far from being a delusion of yesterday, is a doctrine as old as the creation. He would show that it was laid at the very foundation of the Jewish religion, and has ever been held in the highest veneration by the serious and devout among that people. Neither would he disdain to notice that the wisest and best among the heathen philosophers, the Mahometans, and the ancient and pure worship of that wonderful people the Hindoos, all consent in this as a great and fundamental principle of natural religion. As he proceeded, he would illustrate in a thousand instances, and in the history of all religions, the strong propensity there is in man to multiply the objects of his worship. He would show how distinctly, how frequently, and with what emphasis, the doctrine of the divine unity is asserted by Jesus Christ and by his apostles. He would also prove, that this same doctrine was held by the mass of christians with an undoubting faith, until after the Nicene Council at the beginning of the fourth century. He would also mark the gradual corruption of this doctrine—tracing its progress from the time of Justin Martyr, with whom it began, down to the time when the doctrine was wholly lost, along with almost every other important truth, in the ignorance and confusion of the dark Ages. He would consider the causes of this corruption, and point out the true origin of the doctrine of the Trinity. He would show distinctly that it originated in an attempt of those who are called the Platonizing Fathers, to find in the New Testament the same fanciful notions of the divine essence, which they had found in the writings of their favourite philosopher—



this attempt concurring with their desires to elevate as much as possible the character of the Saviour. After thus demonstrating the heathen origin of this doctrine—that it sprang from this desire to make the language of the Bible speak the dogmas of Plato—that it was the fruit of this unnatural coalition between the gospel and a “vain philosophy”—he would not omit to notice the various circumstances, both moral and political, which conspired at that time, and have conspired since, to give ascendancy and permanency to this deep-rooted error.

Passing over the dark ages, during which it was no discredit to Unitarianism to be forgotten, he would endeavour to do justice to those noble confessors, who stood forth at the Reformation to re-assert and maintain the absolute unity of God. Here he would pause to consider the reasons and causes, which prevented the immediate and universal rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity by the first reformers.—It was an error which had nothing to do with those impositions and oppressions of the church of Rome of which they complained, and was therefore the less likely to come into the general plan of their operations. It was also a speculative error, and not a practical one, and for this reason was less likely to be detected. They could perceive *at once* the absurdity of believing, that the bread they were eating was real flesh; but it required some thought before they could perceive the source of the Trinity. The Trinity, too, they had always been taught from their earliest childhood, to regard as an awful mystery. Granting therefore that this doctrine had no real foundation, the peculiar reverence and awe which they must thus have contracted for it, are quite sufficient to account for its being retained long after the other errors of popery had been abandoned;—especially when we consider its comparative inoffensiveness. Besides, we recollect that the point on which the early reformers were more sensitive than on any other, was this—the danger of bringing unnecessary odium on the protestant cause by attempting too much in the beginning. The wisest among them were fully aware, that the Reformation, from its very nature, must be gradual and progressive; and that nothing could be hoped from a rash and uncompromising spirit on the part of its friends. This consideration alone, we may presume, kept many back who were otherwise secretly inclined to Unitarianism; and even those, who had actually adopted its sentiments, may have been prevented from avowing them, from a fear that such a disclosure would as yet be premature. “You know,” says Melancthon in one of his Epistles, “that I always was afraid this controversy would break out. Good God! how much blood this dispute about the nature of the Logos and the

spirit will cause to be shed among our posterity. As for myself, I go to the very language of Scripture, which directs an invocation of Christ. This is to ascribe to him the honour of divinity, and is full of consolation; but curious inquiries concerning his nature are unprofitable."—We are also to be reminded that the Catholics were continually goading the reformers with the objection, that they would never know where to stop; that they would split into a thousand factions, and give up doctrine after doctrine, until no doctrine would be left. In order to guard against this danger, and weaken the force of this objection, the reformers thought it necessary to prescribe certain limits, beyond which they would not pass in their innovations; and the leading men among them seem to have entered into a sort of compact not to transgress these limits themselves, nor suffer them to be transgressed by others. The moment therefore that any one, more bold or more enlightened than the rest, presumed to go a single step beyond them, not only Catholics, but Protestants too, fell upon him; and in general the treatment he received from his protestant brethren was even more severe, than that which he received from the Catholics; as the former opposed him not only as sinning against the truth, and against the state, but as bringing a great scandal on the Reformation. Who then can wonder that no more had the courage in the face of such an opposition to avow themselves Unitarians?—In addition to all this, we are likewise to remember, that the leading reformers had their pride of opinion and their love of consequence. But if others were suffered to reform upon them, as they had reformed on the Catholics, they well knew that their opinions, and even their very names, would soon be forgotten. To prevent this they hastened to draw up their confessions and creeds, which they imposed upon their disciples in the most solemn manner—not as containing *their views* of Christianity, but as containing *the religion itself*, from which none were to be permitted to depart even in the minutest particular. These confessions and creeds, thus framed, thus imposed, and thus identified with christianity, have come down to our times, and numbers still uphold them—some from ignorance, some from indolence, and some from conscientious scruples, some from a reverence for antiquity, some from a horror of innovation, and some from interest and policy. At any rate, however upheld, they have served to perpetuate many errors, and among the rest the doctrine of the Trinity.

These are some of the powerful obstacles, that have prevented the universal restoration of the unitarian doctrine as far as the Reformation has extended. But notwithstanding these obstruc-



tions, he who should give a full and fair history of Unitarianism would have occasion to eulogise the learning, piety, and zeal of many confessors and martyrs to that cause. It has never wanted for warm and able friends and advocates. As early as the beginning of the Reformation, expressions occur in the writings both of Catholics and Protestants, which strongly intimate the existence, even at that period, of doubts respecting the established doctrines. Erasmus has always been suspected with good reason of holding heterodox sentiments on this subject. From documents, too, that remain to us of that interesting people, the Waldenses, we have a right to infer, that *some* among them, at least, dissented from the popular doctrine. But the first men after the Reformation who openly impugned it and taught the strict unity of God, belonged to that much-abused sect, the Anabaptists. The fire caught and spread. The Unitarians soon became a leading and powerful sect in Poland and Transylvania. They prevailed also in Germany, Holland and the Low Countries; in Hungary, Prussia, Silesia, and Moravia; and soon passed over into England. But in all these places they were followed by a furious persecution. Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans, Calvinists and Zuinglians forgot their differences to unite in waging against this poor and unfriended sect a war of extermination. Even the mild and amiable Edward VI.—“the Josiah of English history”—could sign the death-warrant of Joan Bocher, a pious, intelligent, and distinguished female, for denying the Trinity; but to his everlasting honour be it remembered, that he did it with tears in his eyes, and with those memorable words to Cranmer. “My Lord Archbishop, as in this case I resign myself to your judgment, you must be answerable to God for it.”

Under such a merciless and unexampled persecution, is it at all surprising, that the progress of Unitarianism was slow and interrupted? Or will it be regarded as an argument against the system, that it was thus persecuted? Who possessed the true spirit of our religion—those who suffered or those who inflicted the suffering? But though persecution could repress the rising sect, both the force of truth, and the overruling providence of God forbade, that it should utterly extinguish it. The bush was on fire, but it was not consumed. In almost all the places in which Unitarianism originally gained a footing, it has retained a possession to the present time. Our last accounts state, that in Transylvania alone there are nearly two hundred churches. Of this persuasion also are a large proportion of the free continental Baptists, who exist in great numbers in Holland, but especially in Friesland and Utrecht. In Sweden, too, we understand that the rapid growth of Unitarianism is giving much

trouble and alarm to the Lutherans in that quarter. Our last number stated the progress which the truth is making in Geneva, once the very hot-bed of Calvinism. Germany, from all that we can learn, is still in a strange state of effervescence both in respect to politics and religion; but we are persuaded the result of it will be favourable to liberty and correct thinking. It is hardly necessary to say, that England and America present a still more encouraging prospect, not only as to what has actually been accomplished, but as to the general tendency of public feeling and opinion.—And as for such places as Italy and Spain—it would be about as reasonable to expect to find just views of religion there, as in the very heart of the Turkish dominions.

In sketching the characters of the principal unitarians who have flourished since the Reformation, an impartial historian would have frequent occasion to notice the unjust aspersions that have been cast upon them by prejudiced writers. Indeed we know of but few causes that have done more to injure Unitarianism, than the single fact, that its story has been told by its enemies; for, this being the case, what else could have been expected, but that a very unfavourable representation would be made. Even Mosheim, though generally commendable for his fairness and candour, forgets what is due to both in his clumsy and ill-digested chapters on the Anabaptists and the Socinians. Nay, we regard it as morally impossible for a man to give a perfectly fair and impartial account of a sect he dislikes and perhaps abhors;—there are so many ways in which he may indulge the leaning and bias of his mind without being guilty of absolute prevarication—in selecting his authorities, in colouring and applying his facts, and above all in tracing the actions he relates to their probable motives. It is in this way that the characters of many distinguished unitarians have been grossly misrepresented. They have been condemned, unheard and unread, for sentiments which they never held, for motives which they never felt, and for views and intentions that never entered into their thoughts. Charges and insinuations against them, false as they are foul, have been drawn together from sources not entitled to the least respect; and reputable men and even scholars have so far forgotten what was due to themselves, as to adopt and retail them—lending to them their own authority, and by this means giving them a credit and circulation which they could not otherwise have obtained. Those who have had the public confidence have thus abused it—poisoning the ears and hearts of the people. If they have done this in ignorance, we pity them; if they have done it not in ignorance, but to promote the low and sordid ends of a party, we pity them still more. We only wish



for a fair and impartial history, in which these calumnies may be exposed, and the shame of them sent home where it belongs.

Let the truth be known, and there is no sect which has so much reason to be proud of their history. In every age numbers of their persuasion have been pre-eminent for their talents and learning and virtues. They have always too, as a sect, been before their age as the assertors and defenders of civil and religious liberty. The best defences of Revelation against the attacks of infidels, and those which are appealed to by our opponents themselves as standard works, have been written, with scarcely an exception, by unitarians. They have often wrung warm praise even from their adversaries, for the able and dispassionate manner in which they have maintained their cause. They have always been distinguished for adhering to plain scripture to the neglect of mystical interpretations, and often in direct opposition to prescriptive authority and traditional usages. It should also be mentioned to their honour, that they have signalized themselves from the beginning as the strenuous advocates of peace, and of a pacific and unresisting disposition—many among them holding to the extravagant opinion, that a resort to arms is never justifiable even in case of self defence. In consistency with the same spirit, they have confined themselves almost intirely in their preaching to practical subjects, avoiding such as might exasperate the feelings and produce dissensions among brethren. As a sect, too, there is none whose history, from its very commencement, has so seldom been disgraced by acts of bigotry and intolerance, or by the excesses of superstition and fanaticism. And as for their zeal, the strictness of their principles, and their confidence in the justice of their cause, let their constancy under every variety of suffering and oppression bear witness—a constancy, which proved to the satisfaction of even Luther himself, that there was that in this heresy which “iron could not cut in pieces, nor fire consume, nor earthly water overwhelm.”

All this, a just history of unitarianism would prove beyond the possibility of contradiction. Another good effect of it would be to reconcile unitarians to one another, and produce throughout the whole body a greater community of interest and feeling. It would also do away the suspicions and jealousies and apprehensions of many faint-hearted converts, and make them decided and energetic in its support. It would serve as a direct argument in proof of the doctrine;—for only convince men, that unitarianism has made multitudes virtuous and happy—fortifying them against temptation, cheering them in their melancholy hours, consoling them under the heaviest calamities and be-

reavements, shedding over the whole of life and even over its closing scenes, the calm and benign influences of hope and confidence. Only convince men of this and more would be done to convert them to the doctrine, than by a thousand volumes of biblical criticism. Nor are we to forget that the moral effects of such a history as we desire would be in the highest degree beneficial and salutary. It is an excellent remark of Lindsey, in his *Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine*, that "the history of virtuous and upright minds, and inquirers, after the truth—emerging out of the long night of antichristian darkness—seeking the great Source of being and benevolent Father of all—and, having found him, yielding themselves to torture and death rather than disown him, rather than not confess and maintain and declare to others his transcendent majesty and excellency and superiority to the things he has made—presents the most instructive, awful, and animating spectacle and lesson of all others; tending to inspire the reader with the like unshaken courage, and love of truth, and loyalty to the righteous and moral governor of the world." And while on this subject we cannot restrain our inclination to lay before our readers another extract in point from an eloquent English preacher. "The history of Unitarian martyrs would be an interesting subject. Many have suffered in this country under laws which no longer exist; but some of which have only recently been torn from the statute book which they disgraced. Heavily pressed the yoke of persecution on the necks of our forefathers, and its burthen crushed them to the earth. They fell beneath its overwhelming weight; and it formed their only monument. Never yet have they received that well-deserved tribute of posthumous applause, which has been the portion of so many others whose names a recording finger has indelibly traced on the pillar of immortality. They have passed without their fame, for our adversaries have told our tale. But their names and worth are preserved in those imperishable records treasured up in the courts of heaven—were traced by the hand of omniscience, and shall one day be unfolded to an admiring world: then shall they shine as the stars, for ever and ever."

In the Introduction to the volume before us, which has suggested to us these remarks, there is a well executed sketch of the History of Unitarianism in Poland and the adjacent countries; and we value it the more, because the author in his Advertisement allows us to regard it "merely as a rough and imperfect outline of a larger History of Unitarianism which he has for some time had in contemplation, and for which he has collected a considerable mass of valuable materials." We hope he will



soon be able to redeem the pledge he has here given to the public; for nothing would be more truly acceptable, and nothing could do more good than such a work from so judicious a hand. From his present performance we can only make a few extracts without much regard to their connection.

“The person who is considered to have been the earliest public advocate of antitrinitarianism, is Martin Cellarius, a native of Stuttgart. He was born in the year 1499, and educated at the university of Wittemberg, where he is said to have studied with singular success polite literature, philosophy, and theology, the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee and Syriac languages. His learning and talents secured for him the warm friendship of Luther and Melancthon, whose principles he had embraced. Being deputed to hold a public disputation with Stubner and Stork, two of the founders of the German Anabaptists, he yielded to the arguments of his acute and learned opponents, and went over to their party; but pursuing his inquiries further than they had done, relinquished, among other tenets, the doctrine of the Trinity. His defection from the Lutheran cause, and his open avowal of antitrinitarian sentiments, exposed him to various persecutions, to escape which he removed in 1536 to Basil in Switzerland, where he remained until his death in the year 1564. On his settlement in this city he took the name of Borrhaus, being a translation of his original surname into the corresponding Greek term, and was appointed professor of rhetoric and philosophy. He is mentioned by Faustus Socinus in high terms of eulogy as the friend of his uncle Lælius; and the ministers of Transylvania class him with Servetus and Erasmus, as appointed by God to convey to mankind extraordinary information concerning himself and Jesus Christ. Andrew Althamerus, who wrote a work against Cellarius, represents him as having revived the errors of Paul of Samosata, &c. and maintained that Jesus Christ was a mere human prophet.”—p. v.

“The names of several other persons occur about this time, who are reputed to have held antitrinitarian sentiments; but the limits prescribed to this sketch forbid the enumeration of them here, with the exception of Michael Servetus, a man who holds a pre-eminent rank in this class, and whose celebrity, arising both from his splendid talents and his tragical fate, entitles him to particular notice. This distinguished person was born in 1509, at Villanueva in Arragon, where his father exercised the profession of public notary. After having passed with extraordinary success through the customary routine of juvenile instruction, he was sent to the university of Thoulouse to study the canon law. During the three years he passed in this celebrated seat of learning, he devoted a large portion of his time to the critical perusal of the Scriptures,—an employment to which he was probably excited by the spread of the Reformation, and which eventually led to his renunciation of the prevailing opinion concerning the Trinity. Apprehending that in France he could not with safety pursue his theological inquiries, or give publicity to

his own convictions, he removed, in 1530, to Basil in Switzerland, where he obtained the esteem and friendship of the most eminent of the reformed clergy in that city. Having given these divines credit for more enlarged views and a more liberal spirit than they had imbibed, he made no scruple of avowing to them the opinions he had been led to embrace. But he soon discovered that they were as little disposed as the Catholics to extend toleration to any who pursued their speculations further than themselves."

In 1531 we find him at Strasburg, where, sometime in this year, he published his first work on the Trinity under the following title—*De Trinitatis Erroribus, Libri septem, per Michaellem Serueto, alias Reues, ab Aragonia Hispanum.*

"The appearance of this book produced a very powerful sensation among the leaders of the Reformation, who embraced every opportunity to hold it up to public execration, as much, apparently, from the dread of being charged by their Catholic adversaries with holding the opinions of the author, as from their real abhorrence of the tenets it advocated. Bucer, who resided at Strasburg, is stated to have declared publicly to his congregation, that the writer deserved to have his intestines torn from his body."

From this time nothing of much importance occurred in the life of Servetus until in 1541 he removed his residence from Lyons, where he had been sometime employed in superintending the press of the Trechselii, to Vienna in Dauphiny.

"After his settlement at Vienne, Servetus entered into a correspondence with Calvin, then residing at Geneva. In the letters which passed on this occasion, both the learned combatants displayed considerable warmth and acrimony of spirit in the defence of their respective theological systems; and the freedom with which Servetus arraigned the tenets of the Reformer laid the foundation of that implacable resentment to which he ultimately owed his ruin; for Calvin scrupled not to avow that he would be satisfied with no atonement for this attack upon his creed short of the death of his adversary, should the disposal of his life be ever in his power.\* While things were in this state, Servetus committed to the press his last and most celebrated work, intituled *Christianismi Restitutio*, or 'Christianity Restored.' It was printed in 1553 at Vienne, by Balthazar Arnollet, but neither the place nor the printer's name appears in the title page: nor was the author's name attached to this publication;—the letters M. S. V., standing for Michael Servetus Villanovanus, are however placed at the end. Calvin was in possession of the secret that Servetus was the writer of this obnoxious book, a copy of it having been forwarded to him by the author. By means

\* Calvin, writing in 1546 to Viret, minister of Lausanne, uses these words: *Servetus cupit huc venire: si venerit, NUNQUAM PATIAR UT SALVUS EXEAT.*



of a young man named William Trie, a native of Lyons, then residing at Geneva in consequence of having embraced the reformed religion, he procured some sheets of it to be conveyed to France, and put into the hands of the inquisitor at Lyons, with an intimation that the author was in his neighbourhood. He afterwards sent several of the letters which, in the course of a confidential correspondence, he had received from Servetus, in order to furnish additional evidence to convict him of heresy and blasphemy. On the ground of these documents Servetus was arrested at Vienne, and committed to prison; whence, however, he soon effected his escape. After his flight he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to the stake; his books were committed to the flames, and himself burnt in effigy.

"Servetus escaped early in the month of June 1553. His intention was to proceed to Naples; and with this view, after wandering for some time, he went to Geneva, where he was recognised in the month of August, and at the instigation of Calvin committed to prison. Various attempts have been made by the apologists of the Reformer to remove from him the foul stigma of being the author of his adversary's arrest; but, in truth, Calvin himself never denied or disguised the fact. On the contrary, he expressly avows it in more than one of his printed works, and takes credit to himself for having thus acted towards a man whose principles he held in abhorrence, and whom, on more than one occasion, he thought fit to brand with the opprobrious epithet of dog.\*

"Servetus, on being taken into custody, was deprived of the property he had about him, which was of considerable amount, and thrown, like a common malefactor, into a damp, squalid, and noisome dungeon. Proceedings were immediately instituted against him for his alleged blasphemies. The accusations were preferred by Nicholas de la Fontaine, a person residing in Calvin's house, either in a menial situation, or for the benefit of his instruction; but the real prosecutor, as was manifested in the course of the trial, was the Reformer himself. Servetus repelled the whole of the charges with great firmness, and openly avowed himself the author of the writings that were stated to contain the heretical opinions for which he was arraigned. His trial proved exceedingly tedious and vexatious, and lasted from the 14th of August to the 26th of October,

\* Calvin, in his work *Fidel. Expos. Serveti Errorum*, thus avows the part he acted in this transaction. "All the proceedings of our senate are ascribed to me: and indeed I do not dissemble that he (Servetus) was thrown into prison through my interference and advice. As it was necessary according to the laws of the state that he should be charged with some crime, I admit that I was thus far the author of the transaction." Writing to Sultzerus, he observes, "When at last he was driven here by his evil destiny, one of the syndics, at my instigation, ordered him to be committed to prison: for I do not dissemble that I deemed it my duty to restrain as much as lay in my power a man who was worse than obstinate and ungovernable, lest the infection should spread more widely."

when, a majority of his judges having decided against him, he was condemned to be burnt to death by a slow fire.

"If Servetus cannot be commended for the temper with which he sometimes replied to his accuser, it is impossible to view without feelings of disgust, mingled with deep concern, the manner in which Calvin acted during the whole of these iniquitous proceedings; and particularly to observe the savage tone of exultation with which, immediately after his conviction, he stated to a friend the effects produced upon his victim by the communication of his sentence. 'But lest idle scoundrels should glory in the insane obstinacy of the man, as in a martyrdom, there appeared in his death a beastly stupidity; whence it might be concluded, that on the subject of religion he never was in earnest. When the sentence of death had been passed upon him, he stood fixed now as one astounded; now he sighed deeply; and now he howled like a maniac; and at length he just gained strength enough to bellow out after the Spanish manner, *Misericordia! Misericordia!*' The truth, however, is, that Servetus bore his fate at this trying season with great firmness and serenity, disturbed indeed, occasionally, by the view of the terrific apparatus which was preparing for his execution. He never wavered in his religious faith. When exhorted on the last morning by Farell, the minister of Neufchatel, and the friend of Calvin, who was appointed to attend him, to return to the doctrine of the Trinity, he calmly requested his monitor to convince him by one plain passage of Scripture, that Christ was called the Son of God before his birth of Mary.

"The day following that whereon sentence had been passed upon him he was led to the stake, praying, 'O God, save my soul; O thou Son of the Eternal God, have mercy on me.' In order to aggravate his sufferings he was surrounded by green faggots, which, after half an hour of excruciating tortures, completed the work of death. In the same fire was burnt, attached to his body, his last book *Christianismi Restitutio*. Thus perished Servetus at the age of forty four, in a PROTESTANT state, for exercising that right of private judgment in the formation of his religious opinions, which his persecutors had themselves acted upon in dissenting from the Church of Rome!"

It has become fashionable of late for Calvinists to join in reprobating this conduct as loudly as any; but at the same time to impute it altogether to the bad spirit of the age. Bad spirit of the age? But does it make a bad man good, to live in an age in which all men are as bad as he is? Besides, if the spirit of that age were so bad, why go back to it for instruction? why go back to it for your creed? When men so entirely misunderstood the true spirit of Christianity, were they most likely to form a true system?

Unitarianism was introduced into Poland by a native of Holland who went by the name of Spiritus, but who is supposed on



good grounds to have been Adam Pastor. He settled at Cracow in 1546.

"Being one day in the library of John Tricessius, a person of high celebrity in that city, distinguished for his literary acquirements, who had invited him to meet some of the most eminent men of the place, he took down by accident a book wherein he observed prayers addressed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He immediately exclaimed,—'What! have you then three Gods?' The conversation to which this question led made a deep impression on the minds of all the party, but especially on that of Andrew Fricius Modrevius, the king's secretary, who shortly afterwards, in consequence of prosecuting his inquiries upon the subject, abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity, and appeared as the open advocate of Unitarianism in a work which he published under the title of *Sylvæ*."

The sect soon began to extend itself, and continued to receive new accessions until it formed itself into a separate religious body, having its churches, and its collegiate and other establishments, exclusively for its own members. But there does not appear to have been much consistency in their faith, or harmony in their operations, until after the appearance of Socinus, from whom one class of unitarians has been designated.

"In the year 1579 the celebrated Faustus Socinus, the nephew of Lælius Socinus, arrived in Poland. He was born in 1539, and had at an early age imbibed the sentiments of his uncle, whose papers, after his death, fell into his hands. A conscientious attachment to his new opinions, induced him to relinquish the most splendid prospects in his native country, and to go into voluntary exile, in order to be able to prosecute his theological studies, and promulgate his sentiments with the greater facility and security. He retired first to Switzerland, and fixed his residence at Basil. From hence he was called into Transylvania by Blandrata, to assist him in refuting or stopping the dissemination of the opinion of Francis David respecting the worship of Jesus Christ. After that venerable confessor had been thrown into prison, and while the proceedings against him were yet pending, Socinus, alarmed by an epidemic disorder which raged in the country, withdrew to Poland.

"As it was understood that Socinus went further in his sentiments than most of the leading individuals among the Polish Unitarians, he was not permitted to join in communion with their churches, or to have any voice in the direction of their affairs. His splendid talents and high character, however, soon procured for him the friendship and patronage of persons of the first distinction in the country. This circumstance enabled him to give to the public, through the medium of the press, a considerable number of works upon theological subjects. His writings, in which he is considered to have made liberal use of the manuscripts of his uncle, who was

greatly his superior in learning, and particularly in his knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures, served to methodize and fix the indeterminate, and frequently confused notions, held at that time by many of the Polish Unitarians respecting the principal doctrines of Christianity, and to bring over nearly the whole body to his own sentiments concerning the unity of God, and the humanity of Jesus Christ.

The Unitarians of Poland were now become a large and powerful body, comprising in their number several of the first nobility, and eminently distinguished by their learning, talents, and general respectability of character. Their chief settlement was at Racow, a city which was built in 1569 by a nobleman attached to their interest, who erected for them a church and college-house. This collegiate establishment was on a large scale. It maintained a high degree of reputation, and was filled with scholars from every part of the continent of Europe. The number of the students amounted at one time to upwards of a thousand, of whom more than three hundred were of noble families."

This may be called the flourishing period of the history of the Polish Unitarians. Their cause soon began to decline; for both the Catholics and the Reformed united in concerting and commencing against them measures of hostility.

"The first event that operated to the serious disadvantage of the Unitarian interest was a malicious prosecution instituted against an opulent merchant of their body, named John Tyscovicus, who had served the office of Questor, or Syndick, of the town of Biesk in Podolia, where he resided. It was insinuated by his enemies, that his accounts had not been fairly kept, and he was required to verify them on oath. To this he readily assented on condition of being permitted to swear by Almighty God:—but it was insisted that he should swear by the triune God, or by the image of Christ on the cross; and for this purpose a crucifix, with the figure of the Saviour affixed to it, was placed in his hands. Indignant that his veracity should be questioned, and his religion insulted, he threw the crucifix to the ground, exclaiming that he knew of no such God as they proposed to him. For this act, which was construed into a heavy offence against the Trinity, he was immediately arrested and thrown into prison. Proceedings were forthwith instituted against him, which, after repeated appeals from one tribunal to another, ended in his condemnation. He was sentenced to have his tongue pierced, for his alleged blasphemy; to have his hands and feet cut off, for having thrown down and trodden upon the crucifix; to be beheaded for his rebellious contumacy, in appealing from the first tribunal that had given decision against him; and finally to be burnt at the stake for his heretical opinions. This sentence, horrible as it may appear, was, at the instigation of the Jesuits, executed in all its circumstances at Warsaw, on the 16th of November 1611.



Not satisfied with this, they determined to carry forward and make universal a persecution which they had so triumphantly begun. In this they succeeded but too well. In 1658, they procured the passing of a decree—

“forbidding the public exercise of their religion, or the dissemination of their sentiments in any way whatever, under the penalty of death; and commanding them to quit the kingdom of Poland and its dependencies, within three years, unless in the mean time they joined the communion of the Church of Rome, or that of the tolerated reformed churches of the Lutherans or Calvinists. This dreadful edict,—which was confirmed by three successive diets, in direct violation, if not of the positive written laws of the nation, certainly of that enlightened spirit by which the administration of public affairs, as respected the subject of religion, had for upwards of a century been conducted,—fell upon the Unitarians as a calamity of the most afflicting kind. Their body comprised several families of the first distinction, both as to rank and opulence, who adhered to their communion from principle, and whose convictions and fidelity were not to be easily shaken by persecution. The alternative which remained to them, of expatriation, with the certain loss of a very large proportion of their property, and in some instances of almost inevitable and absolute penury, was, however, so appalling, that they determined to use what influence they could yet command to avert the threatening storm, or obtain some mitigation of the sentence. Accordingly, in 1660, two years after the first decree had been passed, a synod was appointed, at the solicitation of some of the more powerful of their adherents, to be held at Cracow, in the month of March, which the Unitarian ministers were invited to attend, in order to hold a public conference or disputation with the Catholics and orthodox reformed on the principal controverted points of their respective theological systems. The Unitarian ministers augured no benefit from this measure, and being withal apprehensive that some snare might be intended, declined being present, with the exception of only one individual, ANDREW WISSOWATIUS, whose name stands most honourably connected with this celebrated assembly. Disdaining to have it imputed to him that he was ashamed openly to avow his religious opinions, or afraid to stand forward as their public advocate, at the hazard of his liberty or his life; and fearing also that if no minister of the party appeared to plead their cause, some individuals, whose resolution might have been shaken by their present sufferings, and their dark future prospect, might make a fatal shipwreck of conscience by abandoning their faith; this intrepid confessor boldly proceeded to the place of meeting, and secured a reception suited to the splendour of his talents and the magnanimity of his spirit. In the disputation which followed, and which continued from the 11th to the 16th of March, Wissowatius, though standing alone, and unsupported, vanquished

by his eloquence, and the overwhelming force of his reasoning, every adversary who appeared against him in the combat."\*

A victory like this, however, could do his friends no good. It only exasperated his enemies the more, and provoked them to a greater vengeance. Under pretence that the Unitarians had violated the terms of the former edict, the indulgence of three years allowed therein was rescinded, and a new edict passed—

"enjoining them instantly to leaving the kingdom, or join the communions authorized by the laws,—empowering all magistrates and others, in case of their disobedience, to bring them before the public tribunals, and even to put them to death. This unexpected ordinance reduced them to the greatest difficulties. Their enemies threw every impediment in the way to their settling their affairs. Many found it wholly impossible to dispose of their property at any price;—others were obliged to part with it for what was considerably beneath its value; so that several of the noble and wealthy families who still adhered to the party, were reduced nearly to a level with the poorest among them. In these trying circumstances some made an outward show of abandoning their faith, and thus saved themselves from the evils of exile;—but a very large proportion, rather than sacrifice their conscience at the throne of human power, submitted to the painful condition of being separated for ever from their native land. These undaunted confessors, comprising many thousand individuals of both sexes and all ages, yielding to their hard destiny, took a final leave of their country, and wandered with uncertain steps, friendless and destitute, to seek an asylum in some foreign clime. Thus was terminated the public profession of Unitarianism in the kingdom of Poland, about one hundred and twenty years after its first introduction into that country, and after giving birth to a host of advocates, distinguished equally by their learning, their talents and their virtues, who were an ornament to their age and an honour to human nature."

We now pass to Transylvania, where Unitarianism had been established about the year 1563 by George Blandrata, physician to the king, assisted by Francis David, a divine of great learning and powerful eloquence, whom Blandrata had converted to his opinions from the Reformed Church.

\* There is a singular testimony to the triumph of Wissowatius on this occasion from a reverend Catholic. Being asked by Wielopolski, the governor of Cracow, who presided at the discussions, what he thought of the controversy, he replied—"If all the devils in hell had been here, they could not have maintained their religion more ably than this one minister has done." "But what," rejoined the governor, "if more of these ministers had been present? and there are many of similar powers." "If such be the case," answered the monk, "I do not know in what manner we are to defend ourselves against such persons."



"In the year 1574, the prosperity of the Unitarian cause was seriously affected by an unfortunate rupture between the two individuals to whom it had chiefly owed its advancement and success. Blandrata having been guilty of a gross offence, which his accusers have veiled under the designation of *peccatum Italicum*, David declined all further intercourse with him, and took measures to destroy his influence in the Unitarian body. This conduct naturally drew upon him the enmity of Blandrata, and paved the way for those proceedings which terminated in his death."

Our author has given us a very fair and impartial account of this unhappy controversy. We wish we could lay it before our readers, but its length and the impossibility of abridging it forbid. We regret this the more, because we think the name and character of Faustus Socinus have been implicated to an unjust degree in this transaction. It has been said, that the part he acted in the persecution of David was in every respect as cruel and unchristian, and still more inconsistent, than that which Calvin acted in the persecution of Servetus. This is not true. It is true that, at the request of Blandrata, Socinus visited Transylvania, and resided more than four months in David's house for the purpose of inducing him, by frequent persuasion, to give up what was accounted his heresy of forbidding the invocation of Christ. It is also true, that he was apprised of Blandrata's intention to accuse David to the prince, and call in the aid of the civil power; and there is reason to believe that he did not use the influence he might have done in preventing this. But it is not true, that Socinus was in any sense the instigator of the prosecution. It is not true, that he was in any sense an accomplice, or even a confidant, in the plot of Blandrata to ensnare and ruin the venerable superintendant. It is not true that he was a party at the trial, or even present at it. In a word, it is not true that he ever justified either directly or indirectly, in his writings or in his conduct, the capital punishment of heresy. Nor is it true that this prosecution was favoured by the great body of Unitarians in Transylvania; but, on the contrary, it was warmly opposed by them almost to a man. All, then, that we can say of this transaction is this—that David fell a victim to the private malice of the unprincipled Blandrata—the common enemies of Unitarianism being disposed, of course, to gratify him in his wish to have one of the most formidable defenders of that cause silenced and condemned.

We can give only one extract in this connexion, which relates to the manner in which the trial was conducted.

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"On the first of June the Diet assembled at Weissenburg (*Alba Julia*;) and David was conveyed to that city, distant from his prison a journey of several days, in a state between life and death. Almost immediately after his arrival he was summoned to appear before his judges, and notwithstanding his exhausted condition was ordered to stand. But the prince, who presided on the occasion, when he beheld him, was struck with compassion, and commanded a seat to be provided for him. The officer of the court having declared the charge on which David was arraigned, Blandrata arose, and stated that he had in vain endeavoured by conversation, letters, and messages, to restrain him from publicly avowing and maintaining his opinions against the invocation of Christ, and that he was therefore compelled, by a regard to his conscience, to resort to this prosecution in order to provide against the dangers which threatened the Church.

"David was then called upon to reply to the accusation preferred against him, of having publicly declared that Christ ought not to be invoked in prayer; and that those who prayed to Christ sinned as much as if they invoked the Virgin Mary, Peter, Paul, and other dead saints. And Blandrata further required that he should answer in respect to his writings, whether he admitted himself to be the author of them?

"The venerable confessor being himself too much oppressed and enfeebled by his disorder to speak so as to be heard by the assembly, obtained permission for his son-in-law, Lucas, to answer in his stead. In reference to his writings, he replied that he would not disown those that were really of his composition, neither would he defend as his, those which were the productions of another, and circulated under his name,—alluding to the Theses which Blandrata had distributed with the authority of the prince. And in respect to the charges themselves, he stated as to the first, that in preaching from the account of the marriage festival at Cana, he had argued, that no divine worship which was not prescribed or commanded in the Scriptures could be agreeable to God. The invocation of Christ was not there prescribed or commanded;—therefore it could not be agreeable to God. And as to the second, he observed, that if, quitting the Scriptures, and following human comments and our own fancies, we seek for grounds for the invocation of Christ, we may also, on the same reasons, invoke saints both living and dead. While Lucas was pronouncing these answers, Blandrata, smiling sarcastically, exclaimed, 'You are returning to Judaism!' To which David mildly replied,—'You, Doctor, also, held this very opinion a few years since!' Shortly after, and as soon as the business of the assembly permitted, Blandrata arose, and observed, 'Francis states that I held the same opinion:—but I declare and protest before God, before the illustrious prince, and the whole Church, that I never held nor concurred in this sentiment. But if I have either said or written any thing to this effect, I now desire to revoke it, and de-



clare my recantation ;' adding, 'and thou, Francis, do thou so likewise.' To this Lucas warmly and abruptly answered, 'He will not ; for it is not firmness but weakness in a man to revoke without reason, that which he has once asserted.' After this interruption, Blandrata moved that the Theses he had printed and circulated under David's name should be read ; which closed the case on the part of the prosecutors.

"David, with considerable difficulty, and against the warm efforts of Blandrata and his associates, obtained permission, on account of the exhausted state of his strength, to postpone his defence till the following day. On the breaking up of the Diet he was reconducted to prison, where he was instantly surrounded by his friends, who were filled with apprehension as to the result of these extraordinary proceedings, and doubtful what course they ought to pursue. In the number of these were several of the principal nobility, who were deeply anxious to save their venerable pastor from the danger which seemed to threaten him. David again implored them not to involve themselves on his account by any measures of violence, even if he were to fall—observing that the world would see and acknowledge that God was one, and was alone to be worshipped with divine honours.

"Early the next morning, David, unable any longer to stand, was carried into court by four ministers. The interval had been employed by his friends in collecting the writings, both manuscript and printed, of Blandrata and others of the prosecutors in this case, which contained the proofs, in their own words, of their having once held the same opinion as David respecting the invocation of Christ. Passages from these were read by Lucas in the defence of his father-in-law—and were most feebly met and evaded by the physician, who spoke as his opponent. The chancellor requested that these writing should be given in to the court ; after which David and his supporters were ordered to withdraw while the assembly deliberated concerning their judgment.

"The prince and the judges then proceeded to interrogate the accusers of David, and to demand of them on oath whether they concurred in his opinion and innovation ;—or whether they deemed it blasphemy against God ? Blandrata rose first to reply, and thus expressed himself: 'I, George Blandrata, profess, before Almighty God, and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, before the holy angels and the elect of God, that I neither am nor have been in any respect a partaker in the guilt of this opinion of Francis David ; and I affirm that it is a novel opinion, and, besides, a horrid blasphemy against God and his Son.' The associates of Blandrata, to the number of twenty-five, having taken similar oaths, the public prosecutor, in the name of the prince, of himself, and of the Jesuits, after asserting his belief in the Trinity, condemned the opinion of David as blasphemy.

"David being again brought before the Diet, to receive judgment, some of his accusers interceded with the prince to spare his life,

alleging that he had been guilty of no capital offence in what he had declared, his argument being taken from the words of Christ. At the same time Blandrata went up Judas-like to his emaciated victim, and embracing him, said, in a low voice, 'Do not fear—I have found favour with the prince.' David indignantly replied, 'Go, go—proceed as thou hast begun.' Blandrata having resumed his seat, his colleagues again importuned the prince to spare the life of the superintendant. But the Hungarian Trinitarian ministers opposed them in a long oration, wherein they exhorted the prince, on the ground of the command of Moses concerning false prophets, to put him to death as a blasphemer; and concluded in these words: 'We this day, by virtue of our office, cite thee, O thou illustrious prince, the keeper of both tables, together with thy consort, thy children, and all thy posterity, before the tribunal of the awful judge Jesus Christ, whom this man has blasphemed, if thou suffer him to live!'

"The prince, at this adjuration, changed colour; and, calling to the officer of the court, commanded him to give the following reply: 'The illustrious prince has heard the orations of both parties: his highness therefore promises that he will take care to evince to all that he will not suffer such an offender to escape with impunity.' Then turning to Francis David, he proceeded: 'The illustrious prince has been made acquainted with the whole of this affair, in what manner, led by thine own fancy, and without the consent of the Church, thou hast fallen into this atheistical, execrable, and unheard-of blasphemy. His highness therefore will, according to thy desert, make an example of thee, because others also ought to be deterred from such fanatical innovations. In the mean time thou shalt be kept in the custody of the prince, until he shall determine further concerning thee.'

"David was now committed to close custody in the castle of Deva, none of his friends or relations being allowed access to him; and here, worn down by the fatigues of his persecutions and the ravages of a painful disorder, he closed a long life on the 15th of November following, in the year 1579."

In extending our attention so far to this historical sketch, we have left ourselves no room to speak of the Racovian Catechism, to a translation of which it is prefixed. To this we may recur at some future opportunity.

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## INTELLIGENCE.

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*Theological school at Cambridge.*—The annual visitation and examination took place on Wednesday July 15, in the presence



of the patrons and friends of the institution, who were highly gratified by the proofs of diligence and fidelity in the use of their privileges exhibited by the theological students, and the promise of future usefulness in the church.

*Society for promoting Theological Education in Harvard University.*—The anniversary discourse was delivered on the Sunday evening preceding commencement, in the Federal-Street Church, by Rev. Dr. Richmond: on the importance of an educated ministry, and the consequent necessity of encouraging seminaries of theological education. The annual meeting of the society was held at the Medical College on the following Tuesday, when the usual business was transacted, and the officers of the Institution chosen. The following is the Report of the Directors:

The Directors of the Society for promoting Theological Education in Harvard College, report to the Society the state of the funds as received from the Trustees in the Treasurer's account, by which it appears that the permanent fund, applicable to the objects of the Society is \$33044 93.\*—During the College year ending this day, thirty-five persons, exclusive of permanent officers of the College, have resided at the University as candidates for the ministry, or members of the Theological Seminary. In the same year two have been ordained, and two are under calls, which they have accepted. Seven are now candidates;—the remaining number have belonged or belong to one of the three classes in the Theological Seminary. Twenty have been assisted by the funds of the Society, or of the College, to the amount of \$2440.

August 28, 1821.

*Subscriptions to Societies.*—We have seen in an English publication (the Monthly Repository) a plan proposed by which the funds of those religious and charitable institutions, which are dependent on subscriptions, may be saved from diminution and even annually augmented. We recommend it to the attention of our Bible Society, Peace Society, Evangelical Missionary Society, Society for Theological Education, &c. as a simple expedient which might be of great service, and can be proved inefficacious only by experiment. The plan is suggested in the following letter to the *Christian Tract Society*.

“Diminution of funds, in institutions like yours, is always to be deeply regretted. Permit, therefore, a member to suggest a

\* This does not include the bequest of Mr. Brown, \$2000, nor \$65, the recent donations of three individuals.

practicable plan of augmenting your means, and with it your usefulness. It is to engraft on your rules a resolution, that your secretary should, in *his annual letter*, solicit in rotation of seniority (as subscribers) the tenth part of your Society, to procure one new member each within the year. The present members of the Book Society, say, are 250. The increase for the next ten years, on this principle, would be about twenty-five annually; and in the subsequent ten years it would be the tenth on 500 members, and so on progressively every succeeding ten years. Would any subscriber consider such a request burdensome, of procuring only *one new member each, in rotation, in ten years*? In adopting it, would it not also contribute to the gradual diffusion of religious truth, as well as to the pecuniary concerns of our Book-Fund and Christian Tract Societies, &c.? Some such constant, *progressive, invigorating* principle is earnestly recommended to the next meeting of your Societies, as the best supply for such losses as the Christian Tract Society experienced in funds and members in the past year."

*Extract from the Fourth Annual Report of the Peace Society in London, 1820.*—The Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace trust that through the encouragement and co-operation of their Christian brethren, the great principles they have endeavoured to exhibit and to promote, have already obtained a stability which gives the strongest conviction of their durable influence, and they may be allowed, from the eminence on which they believe the Society now stands, to look back on the events and vicissitudes which have marked their progress, grateful if they have been enabled successfully to inculcate those important truths, the consequences of which are so closely connected with the virtue and happiness of individual as well as social man.

They have ever considered, that principles so much in accordance with the lovely and peculiar character of our Holy Religion, so beautifully displayed in the temper and conduct of its Founder—so friendly to human improvement—so encouraging to moral exertion—so conducive to the well-being of man—must have their foundation in Immutable Truth. They wished to bring them to the test of honest inquiry—to the ordeal of deliberate investigation. The result has answered their expectations,—it has often exceeded them. A Society, originating with a few individuals, has seen its influence and its ramifications extending through a large portion of our own country; while the exertions and the success of our trans-atlantick brethren have been, perhaps, even more efficient and more encouraging than our own.



In connexion with our own efforts, it is to us a subject of the most complacent feeling, that among the great people so closely allied to us by common ancestry, by common language, and in so many respects by common institutions, there are numerous societies cordially co-operating with us in the promotion of our high and important objects. We have already slightly adverted to this and we cannot refrain on this occasion from wafting across the Atlantic our sincerest and warmest congratulations to our American brethren, with our prayers for their continued, their rapidly increasing success.

During the past year, we have received considerable encouragement from the correspondence of our continental friends. Though the restraints upon public meetings in some countries, and the poverty of others, added to those Revolutions which have agitated many of them,—though these and other circumstances have prevented the establishment of Foreign Auxiliary Societies, yet we are persuaded that our cause is prospering. Its progress, its peaceful progress, disturbs not the superficialities of things, and may not, in consequence, be discerned by the careless observer; but a great change is manifestly going on in the hearts of men, and beneath the frozen surface of seeming indifference, mighty principles are at work, and will sooner or later exhibit themselves in their benign influence.

One new Tract, No. 6, consisting of extracts from a sermon by Dr. Bogue, has been published by permission of the author; also editions of Nos. 2, 3, and 4; No. 2 in Dutch, and the Third Annual Report, have been printed, in all, 54,000 copies; making a total of 207,000 that have been printed since the formation of the Society. The sales and distributions this year are about 30,000. Tract No. 3, has been translated into Spanish, and an edition is in preparation. The amount of Subscriptions and Donations received this year is £413. 8s. 1d. which the Committee lament to say falls considerably below the receipts of the previous year: and as a very extended field of labour is now open to them, the Committee earnestly solicit the attention of their friends to the collection of additional Subscriptions, without which they will be unable to meet the demands on them, particularly for the translation of tracts and documents into foreign languages. They trust the exertions of their advocates will be stimulated by this appeal, and that while no opportunity is lost for circulating the tracts of the Society, they will be provided with the means of availing themselves of those encouraging circumstances which they hail as giving the promise that their great object may be finally accomplished. Several of the Auxiliaries are prosperously engaged in promoting the views of the Society. The Com-

mittee cannot, however, state accurately the number of Subscribers, from the want of returns. New Auxiliaries have been established at BATH, BRISTOL, SOUTHAMPTON, PLYMOUTH, and STOCKTON.

Copies of the Tracts have been transmitted by a member of your Committee, when on the Continent, to the Kings of France and Spain, through the regular channels of communication. Much attention has been excited to the subject in Paris, and your Committee hope that some measures will soon be taken in that capital to promote the cause. Opportunities have been embraced for forwarding Tracts to different parts of the world; and from the seeds thus sown in the British dependencies and in different nations, may we not reasonably look for some fruit?

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*Extracts from Third Report of New-York Peace Society.*—The Committee have to report, That their operations during the past year, have been much restricted for want of pecuniary means. The demands against the Society have, however, been nearly extinguished, and its resources will hereafter be employed in active operations. Since the last anniversary the number of subscribers to the Society has been considerably increased, and its prospects are encouraging.

Of the various books and tracts on hand at the date of the last Report, the greater part has been distributed. The last Report also, and one hundred copies of the current numbers of "The Friend of Peace," taken on behalf of the Society, have been put in circulation.

Among the distributions to individuals living at a distance, the Committee think it proper to mention, that a copy of the several publications was conveyed to the Rev. Mr. Ward, of Serampore, before he embarked on his return to the mission in Bengal.

Your Committee are free to say, that every successive year since the formation of the Society has added to their regard for the object, and increased their confidence of its final success.

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Two poetical communications were received too late for insertion in the present number.

The Notice of New Publications unavoidably omitted.